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ABSTRACT

Making the Grade was a national and local level project designed to raise public awareness and stimulate cooperative action on behalf of American youth. Over the past 3 years, Making the Grade reviewed America's progress in solving problems that prevent youth from becoming productive workers and responsible citizens. It examined the areas of functional illiteracy, juvenile crime, school dropouts, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and youth unemployment. A national report card designed to grade America on progress in eradicating these problems contained all Ds and Fs. This report reviews project efforts during the past 3 years and features the collective outcomes of the project in local communities. Included are an executive summary, introduction, and sections explaining the project's premises and purposes, potential, and accomplishments. Other sections of the report focus on the national media campaign, the community engagement process, feedback from town summit meetings, and lessons learned and implications for action. A list of communities participating in the project, a list of national participating organizations, information on the National Collaboration for Youth and the National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, Inc., and a description of products resulting from the Making the Grade project are appended. The separately published report card brochure, "Not Making the Grade," is appended. (NB)

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Report On The Nationwide Project

Making the Grade:

A REPORT CARD ON AMERICAN YOUTH

National Collaboration For Youth

An Affinity Group of the National Assembly of National Voluntary Health & Social Welfare Organizations

CG 022 584

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April 1990

PREFACE

This report on *Making The Grade* is somewhat paradoxical. While the formally funded project initiated by the National Collaboration for Youth has reached the end of its contract life and thus warrants a "final" report, the activities generated by *Making The Grade* in communities across the country continue to unfold. Therefore, the story told here will describe the implementation process and provide a snapshot sample to date of resulting local activities, but it cannot tell the full story nor begin to aggregate and measure the full impact of the initiative. Analysis of data available to date and review of rich anecdotal information reveal that the cumulative effort has grown beyond original expectations. The voluntary sector, combining forces with other private and public sector counterparts, engaged in a substantive national and local process to confront critical issues facing young people including functional illiteracy, juvenile crime, school dropouts, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and youth unemployment. Direct actions were taken, and diverse community resources were pulled together toward real program and policy solutions.

What follows is, therefore, an unfinished story, encompassing national and local level effort, spanning almost three years, spawning approximately 350 local town summit or other meetings nationwide, and catalyzing new collaborations to develop and carry out community action plans on behalf of youth at risk. Some unexpected dividends resulted — three states issued Statewide Report Cards; an ABC Radio News series on *Making The Grade* was nominated for the prestigious 1989 Edward R. Murrow Brotherhood Award; and the youth of St. Lawrence, New York; Rockford, Illinois; Stockton, California and San Bernardino, California came forward and led their own Town Summit Meetings, to name just a few.

At this writing, the project is still gaining momentum — momentum that was nurtured by dedicated and persistent national staff, amplified by effective media involvement, particularly that of Capital Cities/ABC Television and its local affiliated stations, led by hundreds of voluntary community youth serving activists, and carried out by thousands of educators, business and labor leaders, public officials, religious leaders, parents, youth, and other volunteers and concerned citizens.

Richard F. Schubert
Chair
Making the Grade Project
Immediate Past President
American Red Cross

Margaret Gates
Chair, 1985-1989
National Collaboration for Youth
National Executive Director
Girls Incorporated

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Making the Grade:
A REPORT CARD ON AMERICAN YOUTH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Project

Making The Grade was a national and local level project designed to raise public awareness and stimulate collaborative action on behalf of America's youth. It was sponsored by the National Collaboration for Youth (NCY), a consortium of 15 major national youth serving organizations who together serve over 30 million young people, and a host of other organizations, associations and institutions. The project was supported by the NCY, The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS), The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Development Services, the U.S. Department of Labor, and Burger King Corporation and RespecTeen, a program of the Lutheran Brotherhood.

Over the past three years, *Making The Grade* reviewed America's progress in solving the problems that are preventing too many of our young people from becoming productive workers and informed and responsible citizens — functional illiteracy, juvenile crime, school dropouts, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and youth unemployment. *Making the Grade* was designed to:

- Focus greater attention on the needs of youth;
- Encourage thoughtful consideration of potential changes in public and private sectors;
- Promote effective youth programs;
- Develop new linkages to encourage improved service delivery; and
- Stimulate a heightened sense of individual responsibility for personal and collective action on behalf of youth.

The Rationale

While most young people are preparing to lead productive and responsible lives, it is estimated that one in four adolescents — about seven million youth — are seriously at risk of not making a successful transition from youth to adulthood. Another seven million may be at moderate risk. For these young people, the interrelated problems they encounter threaten to foreclose their futures. For our society, the costs of these problems in human and financial terms are unaffordable and unacceptable. Statistics gathered in the research phase of the project were grim, and the costs of these problems in sheer economic terms are high. But, even greater than these economic costs are the costs in human terms — ruined lives for our young people, a lower quality of life in our communities, and lost potential for our society as a whole. Further, the costs of these problems projected to the year 2000 and beyond threaten America's continued prosperity and standard of living.

The Process

The two major thrusts of this effort were: 1) to conduct a national media campaign to educate the public about the critical problems affecting a significant number of America's young people, and 2) to instigate a carefully designed community engagement process to provide opportunities for citizens to come together to develop and implement viable solutions to these problems.

A National Report Card graded America on our progress in eradicating these problems facing today's youth. The grades were all Ds and Fs.

In response to this national crisis, communities across the country gathered to discuss the issues and develop collaborative action plans to address them. Technical assistance was provided and educational and training materials were developed and disseminated, including videotapes, press kits, and participant's workbooks containing six issue and option papers. Various follow-up activities were initiated to publicize and support the implementation of community action plans. ABC News featured the issues covered by *Making The Grade* in a prime time news special on September 14, 1989, and television stations and newspapers across the country participated, responded, and reported on local developments.

The Results

Over 350 Town Summit Meetings or other community forums were convened across the country. It is estimated that **about 26,000 people nationwide have been involved** thus far in activities related to this project. Many communities are still in the process of calling meetings, performing follow-up activities generated from meetings already held, or planning second or third meetings to develop and implement their action plans. The project included a successful **national media campaign**, and it is clear that the extensive media involvement and coverage was instrumental in generating interest and participation in *Making the Grade*. **Most importantly, *Making The Grade* launched a collaborative community engagement process that is still going on in cities and towns across the nation.**

Feedback from The Town Summit Meetings

Responses from Town Summit Meetings were collected and analyzed. Of the six issues covered in the National Report Card communities were most concerned about substance abuse, by a 3:2 margin. This was followed by teen pregnancy, functional illiteracy, school dropouts, juvenile crime and youth unemployment, in rank order. The issues with most services appeared in the same rank order. Clearly, given the data on the severity of the problem and the degree of concern, the services currently being provided are not sufficient. Participants also named other issues of concern. In rank order these were teen suicide, child abuse, latchkey children, runaway children, homelessness, and health and safety.

Major crosscutting concerns articulated by participants included the need to educate the public about the issues and to improve coordination and communication both among youth service providers and between the service sector and all other sectors, especially including parents and youth.

In addition to the broader recommendations listed above, numerous specific policy and program ideas were proposed by Town Summit Meetings, among them: parenting education programs in high school, community centers, churches, temples, the workplace, more parent support groups, and employers providing paid release time for parents to attend school conferences; requiring youth to stay in school in order to receive or keep a driver's license, strengthening the relationship between school curricula and the world of work, and establishing life skills curriculum; creating accessible resource directories, hot lines, and information and referral services; placing a higher priority

on prevention programs such as Head Start, and early detection of learning disabilities and family problems; and many programs relating to building self-esteem, mentoring, and youth community service. As the funded portion of *Making the Grade* draws to a close, communities all over the nation are working to deal with their concerns and implement their recommendations.

Lessons Learned and Implications for Action

The level of community interest and involvement in the *Making the Grade* Project exceeded all original expectations. In so doing, the initiative has left a legacy that will continue beyond the formal federally and privately funded project life. While this project was designed to address six critical issues facing our young people today, communities grappled with some of the broader, underlying causes and crosscutting issues that contribute to these problems. Following are highlights of the lessons learned from communities participating in *Making The Grade*, and their implications for action:

- **Communities consistently cited effective parenting as a universal theme and an essential ingredient to alleviate many other problems.** They acknowledged that times have changed, and family circumstances are vastly different than they were years ago. They pointed to a lack of parenting support systems and a lack of parenting skills. They noted that those who most need these skills and supports may not voluntarily seek them.

  The implications for action are that parenting education is needed in the high schools and in the community at large. Effective parenting education needs to be integrated into other program efforts. Parental involvement with their children must be encouraged, and communities must find ways to reach those parents who are not involved or who need additional support.

- **Communities consistently emphasized the need for education systems to be more aware of and responsive to current needs.** They acknowledged that schools are expected to do more in our contemporary society with insufficient resources, and that too often our traditional schools are using old models to teach new kids. They further acknowledged that schools should not be expected to solve all of society's problems, and they should not be expected to work unaided.

  The implications for action are that improving the responsiveness of schools is a community-wide responsibility, requiring greater resources and more collaborative efforts among education, government, business, labor, the media, community and voluntary organizations, parents, and the youths themselves.

- **Respondents consistently reported that they discovered how little they knew about what was going on in their own communities.** They were often surprised to learn that the issues being discussed were not exclusive to "somebody else's kids" but were real and immediate issues for their own youths. Similarly, these communities were also surprised to learn of all of the other groups and organizations in their communities who were concerned about, and actively working to remedy, these problems. They noted that the present system and funding streams often encourage turf protection and separateness rather than collaboration. Communities expressed the need for help with collaboration.

  The implications for action are that more communication and collaboration are

essential at the federal, state and community levels. We need to find mechanisms to encourage, foster, and institutionalize communication and collaboration among community services and resources, by promoting interagency policies, programs and other crosscutting efforts.

- **Communities told us that the media were instrumental in raising public awareness and facilitating broad-based mobilization toward a mutual collective effort.** They provided a powerful vehicle for advancing public policy agendas in a responsible and objective manner. They also played a critical role in helping to keep the issues in the public eye and to sustain momentum toward viable solutions. However, communities also expressed concerns that some messages given through TV, advertising, magazines, and other media glamorize alcohol and other drug use, casual sex, and other undesirable behaviors.

  The implications for action are that the media can play a substantial role in helping to address social policy issues at the community, state and national level. We will need to encourage their responsible portrayal of these issues and urge them to deploy their powerful influence as a resource in helping to raise public awareness and mobilize action to help our nation's youth. Public policymakers may want to consider building in the media as a partner on other social policy initiatives.

- **A common theme among the communities was the need to devote programmatic and policy resources to prevention rather than more costly and more difficult cures.** While they were concerned with program oriented issues such as substance abuse or teen pregnancy, they also recognized the need for structural types of responses, including early preventive strategies, service coordination through the creation of umbrella organizations and clearinghouses, resource directories, and other communication tools.

  The implications for action are that both programmatic and structural actions are needed and should be encouraged. The federal government and the states could promote these actions through changes in funding mechanisms and through incentives to encourage preventive measures and promote collaborative processes. Likewise, communities may need to institute their own coordinating mechanisms, such as youth bureaus or councils to facilitate the crosscutting program and policy responses needed.

- **Youth serving organizations discovered that they were sometimes perceived as not reaching the youth most in need of their services.** There was limited understanding of the diversity and wealth of their programs for addressing serious youth issues.

  The implication for action is that youth serving organizations need to heighten the visibility of what they do and to increase their targeted outreach. Schools and government agencies can cooperate with youth serving organizations by identifying and referring youth in need of programs and services. Youth agencies can make their programs and services more accessible by providing them at school sites.

- **The community engagement and mobilization process requires sufficient flexibility to allow tailoring to communities' individual needs; sufficient lead time to identify and involve the stakeholders; and sufficient leadership commitment at the local level to maintain and sustain momentum.** Even with all of

these factors in place, the larger urban areas proved significantly more difficult to mobilize due to their political, social and logistical challenges.

The implications for action are that "business as usual" will not be sufficient to engage and mobilize communities into action and redirect the unacceptable negative trends. The collaborative process can be catalyzed through outside intervention. Understanding the delicate balance between providing sufficient time to allow community dynamics to play out and providing a sense of urgency and real deadlines is essential in order to promote prompt action. National voluntary youth-serving organizations with broad local constituencies are a natural resource to provide such assistance. For the larger urban areas, it may be necessary to divide them into smaller neighborhood cohorts, congregating around some established community institution such as a school or community center.

This Report

This Report on *Making The Grade* reviews project efforts during the past three years, and features the collective outcomes of the project in the communities.

- What was the media's role in and response to the project?
- What were the greatest concerns to local communities as they came to grips with the issues and worked collaboratively on solutions and action plans?
- What went on at the Town Summit Meetings and what was the feedback from the participants on the process, participation, results and accomplishments?
- And, finally, what were the lessons learned and what are their implications for action?

This Report examines *Making The Grade's* legacy and implications for the future in solving these complex and interrelated problems.

INTRODUCTION

While most young people are preparing to lead productive and responsible lives, it is estimated that one in four adolescents — about seven million youth — is seriously at risk of not making a successful transition from youth to adulthood. Another seven million may be at moderate risk. For these young people, the interrelated problems of functional illiteracy, juvenile crime, school dropouts, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and youth unemployment threaten to foreclose their futures. For our society, the costs of these problems in human and financial terms are unaffordable and unacceptable.

Recognizing the seriousness of these interconnected problems, the National Collaboration for Youth initiated a three-year national and local level project called *Making The Grade*. In preparation for this project, the National Collaboration for Youth commissioned Child Trends, a nationally known, non-partisan research firm, to develop reliable data about the current crisis, and to project the implications of these data for the year 2000 and beyond.

The statistics gathered were grim. They revealed that, among industrialized nations, the United States leads the world in infant mortality, juvenile crime, substance abuse and teen pregnancy. Despite mandatory school enrollment, our literacy rate is below that of other developed nations, with 13 percent of U.S. high school students reading below the sixth-grade level, and one in four students dropping out of school. In 1987, nearly 1.8 million persons under the age of 18 were arrested for offenses ranging from murder to disorderly conduct. A total of 60 percent of young people, age 25 and under, have tried drugs. The leading cause of death in children is violence or automobile accidents — both of which are often related to drug or alcohol abuse. One in ten 15-19 year olds becomes pregnant each year, and there is a one in three chance that a teen mother will have a second child while still in her teens. As of June 1989, the unemployment rate for 16-19 year-olds out of school was 15.6 percent.

The costs of these problems are high. The average cost of housing one youth in a public juvenile facility is $27,000 per year. Each year's class of dropouts costs the nation about $260 billion in lost earnings and foregone taxes. Alcohol and drug abuse cost America over $175 billion in 1983 in reduced productivity, treatment, crime, and related costs. Teen pregnancy costs American taxpayers over $19 billion per year for cash assistance, food stamps, and medical care. Functional illiteracy jeopardizes America's productivity, prosperity and competitiveness. Likewise, unemployable youth are unable to pay taxes, contribute to Social Security, or support themselves in today's society.

And, even greater than these economic costs are the costs in human terms — ruined lives for our young people, a lower quality of life in our communities, and lost potential for our society as a whole. Further, the costs of these problems projected to the year 2000 and beyond threaten America's continued prosperity and standard of living.

Functional Illiteracy

As employers' skill requirements are rising, most 17-year-old high school students are weak in the reading and math skills they will need to successfully compete for jobs and education in the 21st Century. These skill deficiencies are costing America monetarily through waste, lost productivity, increased remediation costs, reduced product quality, and ultimately a loss in competitiveness.

Juvenile Crime

During the 1960s and early 1970s, juvenile crime skyrocketed. Crime rates have remained steady or even declined slightly since the late 1970s, but crime levels are far higher than they were thirty years ago. The total number of juvenile arrests in 1987 was more than triple the number recorded in 1960, and the juvenile arrest rate was more than double the 1960 rate.

If efforts to combat drug dealing and other forms of juvenile crime are not successful, there will be about 2 million juveniles arrested in the year 2000, and the arrest **rate** will rise from 124 to nearly 140 arrests per 1,000 persons aged 14-17.

School Dropouts

The ratio of dropouts to graduates has remained virtually unchanged for over a decade, in spite of a great deal of national, state and local, and public and private sector attention to education reform and improvement.

Many of those who fail to graduate on time are already handicapped when it comes to finding a job, learning a trade, or going to college. Statistics show that more than half of all new jobs created between 1984 and the year 2000 will require some education beyond high school, and almost a third will be filled by college graduates.

In the year 2000 and beyond, as the educational requirements of our society rise, a young person without a high school diploma will have a hard time finding any job, let alone one with wages high enough to support a family.

Substance Abuse

The United States has the highest rate of teen alcohol and other drug use of any industrialized nation. The drug problem in this country is 10 times greater than in Japan.

Use of illegal drugs by young people had risen to epidemic proportions by the 1970s. Although the levels of use have declined somewhat from peak levels reached in the late 1970s, they continue to be far higher than they were 25 years ago. The availability of cocaine in a relatively inexpensive form - "crack" - seems to be producing a dramatic increase in the use of this drug. Everyday, young people are killed in drug-related violence.

While some progress has been made, unless there is greater progress toward changing the widespread tolerance of drug and alcohol abuse, there will be 4 million teens who use marijuana in the year 2000, 2 million who use various forms of cocaine, and 11 million who use alcohol. Drug abuse and drug-related crime will continue to burden our criminal justice and health-care systems, and society will pay an enormous price in ruined lives and wasted resources.

Teen Pregnancy

Between 1973 and 1985, the number of teenagers who became pregnant hovered around 1 million per year. Although the number of pregnancies remained constant, due to the shrinking number of female teenagers during this period, the pregnancy **rate** grew by 15 percent, from 9.6 per hundred to 11 per hundred.

In the year 2000 and beyond, unless circumstances change, nearly 400,000 teenage girls age 15-17 and another 600,000 older teenagers will become pregnant each year.

Youth Unemployment

As with other segments of the population, unemployment among non-college youth has declined from peak levels reached in the recessionary period of the early 1980s. However, given that there are fewer teenagers in the population and jobs in retail trade and service industries are going unfilled, anything less than full employment for young high school graduates must be considered unsatisfactory.

Unless efforts succeed to expand employment opportunities and upgrade workforce skills for young people, it is likely that youth unemployment will remain too high. In the year 2000, there will be about 1.2 million young high school graduates who are unemployed, and the unemployment **rate** for those not enrolled in school will be about 11 percent.

The National Collaboration for Youth collected these statistics and shared them with more than forty national organizations, polling them on the seriousness of these problems, and asking them to grade America on our progress in eradicating them. The Report Card on American Youth is the result of this poll of experts.

How Well Is America Doing Toward Solving The Problems Facing Our Youth? Here's the National Report Card:

Report Card:

How well is America doing toward solving the problems facing our youth?

Subject	Grade
Functional Illiteracy Comments: 13% of U.S. High School graduates read below a 6th grade level.	F
Juvenile Crime Comments: In 1987, nearly 1.8 million juveniles were arrested.	F+
School Dropouts Comments: One in four students drops out of school	F+
Substance Abuse Comments: The leading cause of death to children is drug and alcohol related violence and automobile crashes.	D-
Teenage Pregnancy Comments: 40% of young women become pregnant before they reach 20.	D-
Youth Unemployment Comments: Youth unemployment is 3 times the U.S. adult unemployment rate.	D+

Grades are based on a poll of experts from Making the Grade participating organizations.

PREMISES AND PURPOSES

In the last few years, there has been a growing consensus among national organizations and commissions concerned with youth that we are facing a crisis with respect to this critical segment of our society. In response to this collective concern, the National Collaboration for Youth initiated an innovative project called *Making the Grade*. *Making the Grade* sought to educate the public about the critical problems affecting a significant number of America's young people, and to provide opportunities for citizens to come together at the community level to develop and implement viable solutions to these problems.

Making the Grade was designed to:

- Focus greater attention on the needs of youth;
- Encourage thoughtful consideration of potential changes in public and private sectors;
- Promote effective youth programs;
- Develop new linkages to encourage improved service delivery; and
- Stimulate a heightened sense of individual responsibility for personal and collective action on behalf of youth.

While there are many programs that work, and many communities have tackled these issues in thoughtful and comprehensive ways, the sum of these efforts does not add up to a satisfactory report card for America. As a nation, we are currently failing too many of our youth. For this reason, the National Collaboration for Youth launched *Making The Grade*.

The unique focus of this project was its emphasis on **the interrelated nature of the six trends** — functional illiteracy, juvenile crime, school dropouts, substance abuse, teen pregnancy and youth unemployment — that threaten to foreclose the future of our youth. A teenager using drugs or alcohol is likely to have problems in school and in looking for a job. A pregnant teenager is likely to be a dropout, unemployed and poor. Eighty-five percent of teenagers appearing in juvenile court are functionally illiterate, as are 79 percent of welfare dependents, 85 percent of dropouts, and 72 percent of the unemployed.

Therefore, one underlying premise for this project was that **our responses as a society must address these multiple high-risk problems in a coordinated, comprehensive manner**. While categorical programs that focus on one area are important, they will continue to have limited effect unless they are linked together in a more rational, comprehensive, community-wide system.

A second underlying premise of *Making the Grade* was that national and state policy leadership, funding and awareness campaigns are critical, but **action plans to address local problems are best crafted at the community level, where solutions are more possible and proximate.**

Making the Grade was designed as an inclusive process — not a prescription — to be carried out simultaneously at the national and community levels. The two major thrusts of this effort included a national media campaign and a carefully designed community engagement process intended to foster action on specific youth problems at the national and community levels.

The National Collaboration for Youth designed the process to bring the voluntary youth serving sector into the current deliberations on this crisis. The National Collaboration for Youth is a consortium of fifteen of the largest

youth serving organizations. The Collaboration and its parent group, The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, brought to this project the hands-on experience of their member organizations which together serve over 50 million people. The Assembly represents the voluntary sector, a traditional resource for community problem solving, with a vast network of local affiliates who assisted in implementing the process.

Working in partnership with the Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies, project staff developed six issue and option papers on the various problem areas affecting youth for use in the community forums held around the country. These papers provided an overview of each problem and its dimensions, reviewed current issues of concern, described selected programs that work, and provided additional references and resources for the interested reader.

The Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies, a non-partisan policy institution, brought to the project its expertise in helping citizens deal with critical policy issues through an accelerated learning process and providing assistance in coming to judgement on policy options.

Together The National Assembly, the National Collaboration for Youth and the Roosevelt Center designed the component parts of *Making the Grade* during the initial project planning phase. These components included written materials, training and technical assistance, a national media campaign, and follow-up activities to publicize and support the implementation of community action plans.

POTENTIAL

"Individuals in communities can have large impacts by articulating problems and solutions, offering leadership, and bringing people together to deal with their own neighborhoods."

Joy G. Dryfoos
"Adolescents At Risk:
Prevalence and Prevention"

The anticipated benefits from the *Making the Grade* Project were substantial. It was envisioned that *Making the Grade* could:

- Improve the visibility of the work being done by local and national organizations by bringing media attention to successful programs;
- Create or strengthen coalitions attempting to address the various problems facing youth by improving communication among agencies and community organizations;
- Improve the outreach capability of agencies seeking to serve disadvantaged youth by identifying underserved populations;
- Provide community-wide needs assessments for community foundations and others seeking to fund the most-needed services for youth;
- Develop partnerships among schools and youth serving agencies, service providers and business leaders, and many other groups whose interests would be well served by working together.
- Provide an opportunity for national, state and local policymakers and elected officials to hear directly from their constituents about the problems of youth on a community-by-community basis;
- Present policymakers with a unique opportunity for participating with their constituents in a discussion and agreeing on solutions which their constituents could support; and
- Provide a means of countering the trend toward single focus programs which often are duplicative, inefficient and ineffective.

The potential of *Making the Grade* was summed up by the Project Chair:

"With everyone in a community committed to making a difference, we can reverse these unacceptable trends that can lead to an intolerable society for our children and grandchildren."

Richard F. Schubert, Chair
Making The Grade
Immediate Past President
American Red Cross

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

"The really good news about this project is that we have already saved some kids. In one community, the earliest planning meeting resulted in filling ten empty beds, earmarked for adolescents, in a substance abuse treatment center. Since the Town Summit Meetings, we know we've prevented some young people from running away and others from dropping out of school. Helping kids ... that's what Making The Grade is all about."

Stefanie W. Reponen
Outreach Director
Making The Grade

"Since our town meeting, an organization named C.A.R.E. for Kids has been formed. This group consists of human service agency representatives, P.T.O. officers and members, ministers and interested parents. We are working on issues involving youth. Currently, a series of parenting classes is being sponsored by this group. Other projects are in the planning stages."

Lorraine S. McDowell
Youth At Risk Program Assistant
Cooperative Extension Cameron
County, Emporium, Pennsylvania

"Addressing the issues is just the first step, the easiest one. Now we must do the hard part — acting on the suggestions and following through on the programs."

Verdia Hayward
Deputy County Executive
Fairfax County, Virginia

"The National Collaboration for Youth has always considered itself a voice for youth. Making The Grade has given us the opportunity to make a statement to the nation and to encourage the kind of collaborative action that the National Collaboration for Youth seeks to promote."

Leonard W. Stern, Executive Director
The National Assembly

Approximately 350 communities across America participated in *Making the Grade*, far exceeding the initial goal of one hundred. We estimate that nationwide, about 26,000 individuals from smaller rural towns, entire counties, and cities of all sizes have been involved in activities related to this project. Over 200 communities convened Town Summit Meetings or other community forums on *Making the Grade* issues. Others brought together participants to view and discuss the Barbara Walters ABC-TV Special or used the written material as educational tools.

***Making The Grade* generated tangible resources, products, and assistance to help communities take action on behalf of their youth.** Policymakers and program practitioners have access to a variety of resources and tools to help them structure their efforts and network among one another. Among the additional tools and resources made available to the communities were:

- A National Report Card, which graded America on our progress in eradicating problems facing youth in the six issue areas, described the current reality, explained why it is a critical problem, and presented the implications for the year 2000 and beyond.

- Participant's Workbooks, to provide information about the process and the issues to invitees to the Town Summit Meetings. These workbooks included a proposed Town Summit Meeting agenda; a set of issue and option papers on each of the six critical issues; and worksheets to help prepare for participation in the community meeting.

- Event Leader's Guide, provided to Town Summit Meeting moderators and small group discussion leaders containing an

overview of the Town Summit Meeting process, guidelines for moderators in preparing to lead the Town Summit Meeting, the opening and closing plenaries, and introducing the small group discussions.

- Two videotapes, one to train discussion leaders in the communities, and the other to introduce each Town Summit Meeting with a national framework for the discussion.

- A newsletter, published periodically for participating communities as well as corporations and national organizations, to provide information on the project, and to stimulate sharing and networking among the participating communities.

- Technical assistance, provided by telephone and site visits.

- The following were produced at the end of the project:

  A Town Summit Meeting kit for future town meetings containing the above, as well as step-by-step instructions for organizing such meetings.

  A videotape summarizing the issues and project activities and encouraging community discussion and action.

  The Community Collaboration Handbook designed to guide communities in developing and implementing collaborative efforts.

- This report on *Making the Grade*, summarizing almost three years worth of effort and providing a synopsis for policymakers, funders, participating communities and other interested parties.

***Making The Grade* Waged A Major National Media Campaign.** Television, radio and print media were actively involved in helping to plan, publicize and implement *Making The Grade*. For the first time, a major commercial television network special was linked with an outreach effort involving hundreds of local communities. The next section of this report will describe media involvement in *Making the Grade*.

Perhaps most importantly, the collaborative community engagement process begun by *Making the Grade* has launched ongoing efforts. Momentum continues with communities convening additional meetings, working actively and aggressively to implement the ideas and recommendations that emerged from their forums.

National Media Campaign

"ABC is proud to use the power and the reach of television to increase public awareness and understanding of the expanding problems that have created a crisis situation for many of our young people, our communities and our nation. We must come together as a nation to step up to the challenge of helping our young people."

James E. Duffy
President of Communications
Capital Cities/ABC, Inc.

Since one of the two stated goals of *Making the Grade* was "to educate the public about the critical problems affecting a significant number of America's young people," the role of the media — their involvement and response — was a critical component.

Media Involvement and Response

From the beginning, ABC Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) and the Office of Communications for Capital Cities/ABC, expressed a strong interest in *Making the Grade*. It fit well into the ABC/PBS PLUS Project on Literacy and provided a viable avenue for ABC to produce a comprehensive program on the problems facing youth in America today. Through continuing negotiations over many months, ABC-TV committed to base the youth phase of Project Literacy U.S. on the six issues in the project, and to encourage the involvement of local ABC affiliate station managers in the community engagement process, including local coverage of the project.

At the national level, ABC-TV aired a one-hour News Special on September 14, 1989 hosted by Barbara Walters, entitled "Survival Stories: Growing Up, Down and Out." Approximately **17 million viewers** saw this special. The television program generated over 3,000 telephone calls requesting information on volunteering, Town Summit Meeting sites and contacts, and specific programs depicted during the ABC News Special.

The ABC Office of Communication produced a series of Public Service Announcements on the six issues which aired on ABC television and the Public Broadcasting System (PBS). These PSAs, entitled "Dreams vs. Reality" are still being aired as of the writing of this report.

A videotape describing the purpose and the process of *Making the Grade* was sent by closed circuit television to all ABC affiliate stations. It was followed by a packet of material which encouraged stations to get involved in local organizing committees. Stations made the videotape available to organizers in their viewing area. KOCO-TV in Oklahoma provided 100 copies of the videotape for additional distribution by *Making The Grade* project staff.

The response from the local ABC television stations was very enthusiastic. Many local ABC-TV affiliates aired special programs ranging from short news spots to hour-long documentaries specifically discussing the state of youth (problems and solutions) within their viewing areas. Some followed the national news special with segments on local news. Others broadcast all or part of the Town Summit Meeting, or volunteered to convene the local organizing committees. Many ABC news anchors or journalists served as moderators of their local Town Summit Meetings, and several are chairing or co-chairing the local implementation task forces. ABC TV local affiliates in **Amarillo, Texas**; **Rockford, Illinois**; **Decatur, Illinois**; and **Columbus, Georgia**, to name just a few, took the initiative and played a major leadership role within their

communities. There were numerous other examples:

- WVGA in **Valdosta, Georgia**, held viewing parties all over town, including one on a big screen TV in City Hall. The Barbara Walters TV special was preceded by a one-hour program produced by the Lowndes Drug Action Council and ABC. This was followed by a Town Summit Meeting two weeks later.

- WJLA in **Washington, DC** is convening and organizing four Town Summit Meetings to take place in early summer 1990.

- KOCO in **Oklahoma City** aired a one-hour local television show featuring Oklahoma City's report card and the National Report Card. This program was followed by a televised Town Summit Meeting. The TV station continues to be involved in the implementation plans.

The National Media Outreach Center of the Public Broadcasting System alerted their regions about *Making the Grade*, and several local affiliate stations were closely involved and provided coverage and assistance. Local community cable television also featured programs about the issues, aired Town Summit Meetings, and hosted follow-up discussion panels.

It is estimated that over 500 ABC radio stations from the 2,500 member ABC network across the nation aired four, five-part news series during September on the six issues. Peter Jennings hosted a live one-hour special, "Education: Are We Failing Our Kids?" This was a nationwide talk show with substantial audience participation through the use of telephone call-ins.

In addition to the widespread television coverage, the print media, including newspapers, journals, etc., were widely used, both to generate interest in the meetings beforehand, and to report on results subsequently.

A press conference was held on September 6, 1989 at the National Press Club to release the National Report Card. Many National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) Executives were present. Richard Schubert, Chair of *Making the Grade*, presided, and Margaret Gates, Chair of the National Collaboration for Youth, released the Report Card on American Youth and discussed its implications. In addition, David Hornbeck, Chair of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development; Yvonne Kennedy, State Legislator from Mobile, Alabama and National President of Delta Sigma Theta; and Ronald Frazier, Director of Alexandria, Virginia Youth Services and youth representative Rosella Sprow, participants from Town Summit Meeting field test sites, spoke. Press kits were disseminated to all media representatives.

A full page advertisement was placed in USA Today on September 14, the day of the prime time ABC News Television Special, with funds donated by Burger King.

Additional resources used to help spread the word were the newsletters and national conferences of major national organizations including The National Assembly, Youth Policy Institute, National Alliance of Business, Child Welfare League of America, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Education Association, National League of Cities, 70,001 Training & Employment Institute, United Way of America, National Association of Secondary School Principals, American Medical Association Auxiliary, American Association of University Women, National School Boards Association, National Association of Private Industry Councils, and many others. Additionally, an article in Foundation News generated several calls from foundations expressing interest in *Making the Grade*.

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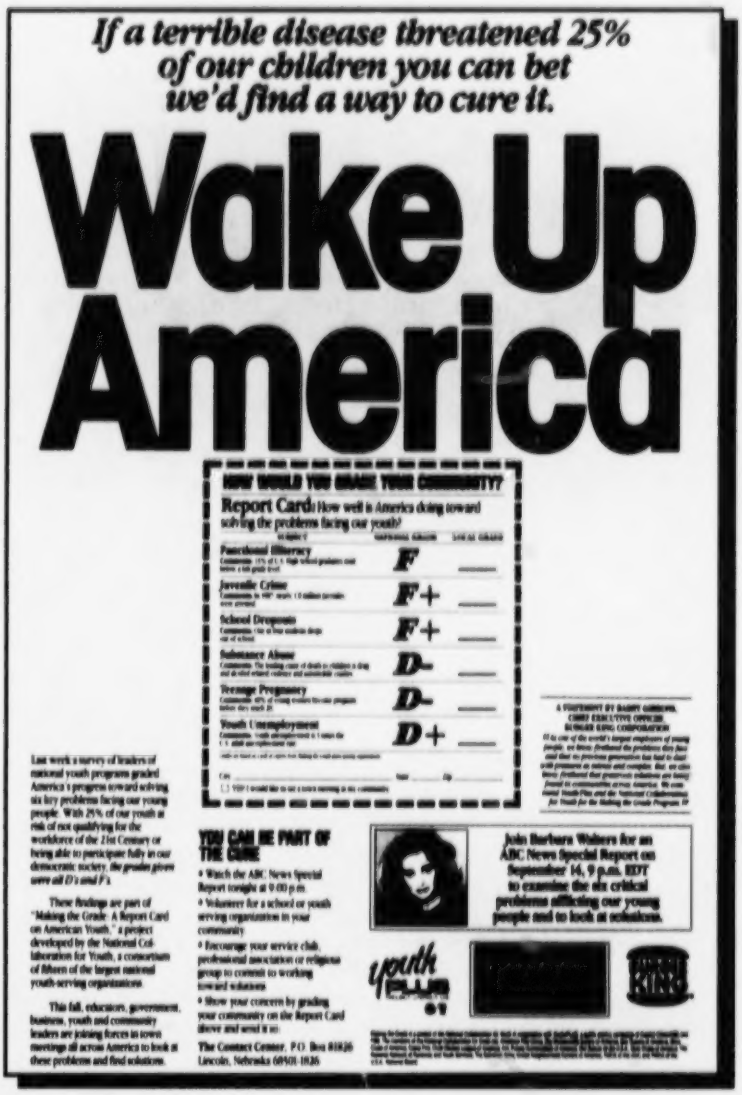
At the local level, communities received extensive newspaper coverage. Local report cards were published along side the National Report Card; editorials lauded the efforts of the local *Making the Grade* organizers; and Town Summit Meetings themselves received a good deal of newspaper coverage.

Implication of Media Involvement

The media strategy was time-consuming, often frustrating, but worth every bit of time and effort. ABC Television deserves credit for its substantial efforts both on the national level, and in reaching out to their affiliate stations nationwide, urging their participation.

Media - television, radio and print - can be an invaluable instrument in helping to heighten public awareness, stimulate action, and keep the issues alive. In fact, policy makers may wish to consider building in a role for the media in other national/local collaborative, crosscutting social policy demonstration projects.


If a terrible disease threatened 25% of our children you can bet we'd find a way to cure it.
Wake Up America
HOW WOULD YOU GRADE YOUR COMMUNITY?
Report Card: How well is America doing toward solving the problems facing our youth?
Functional Illiteracy F
Juvenile Crime F+
School Dropouts F+
Substance Abuse D-
Teenage Pregnancy D-
Youth Unemployment D+
YOU CAN BE PART OF THE CURE
• Watch the ABC News Special Report tonight at 9:00 p.m.
• Volunteer for a school or youth serving organization in your community
• Encourage your service club, professional association or religious group to commit to working toward solutions
• Show your concern by grading your community on the Report Card above and send it to:
The Contact Center, P.O. Box 81826
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-1826
Join Barbara Walters for an ABC News Special Report on September 14, 9 p.m. EDT to examine the six critical problems afflicting our young people and to look at solutions.

This ad featured the National Report Card, told readers how they could be part of the cure and invited them to join Barbara Walters for an ABC News Special Report. The ad appeared in the "Life" section of the newspaper and was seen by millions of readers.

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The Community Engagement Process

"It would appear that in some communities the Town Summit Meetings will continue and have a long-term effect. It is wonderful that these youth problems were brought to a place and environment where youth and adults could have dialogue and seek solutions."

Sherrill J. Benson, Lt. Colonel
National Consultant for Evangelism
and Christian Education
The Salvation Army

"We do not know for sure where we will go from here, but steps are being taken to improve communications among all involved. This project has increased our awareness of programs already in action and has established many new professional relationships for the Isabella County Extension Office."

Vera Wiltse
Extension 4-H Youth Agent
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

The Purpose

The citizens at Town Summit Meetings or other community forums — adult professionals and volunteers, and youth — gathered to discuss the implications of the National Report Card for their communities. Participants in these meetings 1) assessed the local network of services for youth; 2) identified service needs which currently are not being met; and 3) began to develop action plans to improve and coordinate services for youth.

These Town Summit Meetings were designed to serve as a public education and community engagement process involving both youth and adults. The attendees represented all sectors of the community — educators, policymakers, human service agencies, business executives, leaders of religious and civic organizations — the whole spectrum of interest and influence in the community. The intent of the Town Summit Meetings was to:

- Educate citizens about the issues by viewing the television special and reading the background materials prior to the meeting;
- Provide information about the local youth service picture, in most cases through a locally developed report card;
- Determine the scope of the current network of youth services, and identify the unmet needs or services requiring greater coordination;
- Identify opportunities for collaborative action;
- Rank the strategies developed in their discussions; and
- Develop an action plan to meet the needs of the youth in their communities.

The Format

Communities were free to design their own process and format for their Town Summit Meetings. However, for those who wished to follow the format suggested by the National Collaboration for Youth, an agenda structure was provided. It called for:

- A 60-90 minute opening plenary consisting of an introduction and welcome video, providing an overview of the project and the objectives for the day's work; a participant huddle to discuss their expectations for the

day; a set of "point-of-view" presentations by a teacher, a parent, a student, a government official, a business person, and a volunteer service provider; a full group reaction and comments; and an inventory of existing services in the community;

- A set of small group discussions to develop a foundation for strategy-building and to assess the current network of programs and services for youth in the community;

- A set of small group discussions to envision the ideal system, brainstorm on new programs and new players needed, and set priorities on their list of recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the community's response; and

- A closing plenary to permit working groups to share and discuss their recommendations, to create a document outlining a collaborative community strategy, to identify a group of people to use the output of the meeting to develop an implementation plan, and to obtain commitments from participants to work together in that effort.

Each Town Summit Meeting or community forum was unique, based on the community's own perceptions of the issues, the task, and the parties to be included. Some meetings were arranged quickly, conducted simply, and reported out expeditiously. Other communities used more complex processes, produced more sophisticated materials, including formal printed invitations, elaborate locally produced report cards, and other materials. Some are still trying to convene their first Town Meeting; others have held two or three and have begun follow-up activities in earnest. Some used nationally known keynote speakers; others called upon various community representatives to elaborate on the issues. A few communities held Town Meetings conducted by and consisting solely of youth themselves.

Highlights of Town Summit Meetings

Following are selected examples of noteworthy initiatives collected from around the country. They are provided as illustrations of the diversity of ideas and innovative approaches taken by the various communities:

Prominent people were featured at many Town Summit Meetings.
Local elected officials and key government policymakers — including Mayors, State Legislators and Members of the U.S. Congress — sat side by side with parents, teachers, young people, and representatives of concerned community organizations.

- The **Valley Forge, Pennsylvania** meeting was titled "Kids at Risk in the Suburbs." Approximately 350 people attended. The keynote address was given by Vincent A. Cirillo, President Judge, Superior Court of Pennsylvania. The final keynote speaker was Bill Blakemore, education reporter for Peter Jennings' "American Agenda."

- In **Fairfax County, Virginia**, Lynda Johnson Robb, wife of Virginia Senator Charles Robb, and daughter of the late President Lyndon B. Johnson, gave the keynote address at the first Town Summit Meeting, and Lt. Governor Donald S. Beyer, Jr. was the keynote speaker for Summit II.

- In **Laurel, Mississippi**, Mike Moore, the State Attorney General, served as moderator of the full day Town Summit Meeting. All Town Summit Meeting sites within the state are being encouraged to link their efforts to a state substance abuse prevention initiative called SWEEPS.

- In **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**, Sandy Garrett, the State Secretary of Education,

moderated the Town Meeting.

- In **Hawaii**, the Chair of the Hawaii State Legislature's Committee on Child and Human Services, Dennis Arakaki, served as honorary Chair of the Town Summit Meeting.

Youth played an active role within their Town Summit Meetings. These youth described the problems from their points of view, and had the opportunity to speak and be heard by influential and powerful community leaders. In some communities, the youths themselves convened their own Town Summit Meetings, for example:

- In **St. Lawrence County, New York**, the Director of the Youth Bureau convened youth Town Summit Meetings in each of six local high schools. Participants in one meeting were so enthusiastic that they asked for and were given permission from their school's administration to hold monthly town meetings in that school.

- **San Bernardino, California** convened an all-youth Town Summit Meeting to validate the recommendations from their community-wide Town Summit Meeting. San Bernardino youth acted as facilitators, with a handful of adult assistants. These young people emphasized that they wanted, and required, ownership in both the problems and the solutions. The Mayor of San Bernardino, Bob Holcomb, was so impressed that he has helped in forming a youth commission, will hire a youth commissioner, and is looking for an appropriate site for a new youth center.

- In **Rockford, Illinois**, the Mayor's Youth Policy Advisory Council hosted a Town Summit Meeting, as a result of which, the local youth decided to convene their own town meeting. (See Highlights on Rockford, Illinois later in this report.).

- **Stockton, California** convened an all-youth Town Summit Meeting in conjunction with the University of the Pacific. The college youth served as facilitators.

- In **Hawaii**, over half of the 204 participants in their Town Summit Meeting were at-risk youth. In addition to the six issues identified for discussion, Hawaii participants added three others: out of home living (homelessness, runaways and foster care kids); suicide, and mental and physical health services.

Communities had excellent media coverage, including television specials, local news features, even televised coverage of their Town Summit Meetings. Numerous communities shared their extensive newspaper clippings with project staff, illustrating the degree of public attention given to these serious issues. Just a few examples:

- In **Columbus, Georgia**, the ABC Television manager took the lead, and, together with the community college, convened the Columbus Town Summit Meeting. Matt Zucker, Director, Office of Corporate Initiatives at Capital Cities/ABC, was the keynote speaker. Their meeting received excellent media coverage, including a four-part news story, spots, and an update every three months on community affairs.

- **Wichita, Kansas** held a 45 minute live television summit meeting in addition to a six hour, long-range planning town meeting.

- **Kerr County, Texas** was featured in a one-hour KERA-TV Television Workshop funded by the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, as a success story in making community connections. The program highlighted a variety of activities initiated by the first Town Summit Meeting in Kerrville, as well as progress reports presented at the second Summit.

Some communities used the process to advocate for legislation, programs or funding to facilitate solutions, or to implement legislation or programs already in place:

- In **Honolulu, Hawaii**, the *Making the Grade* project was viewed as a possible vehicle to help implement recently passed state legislation dealing with youth and families. Two youth participants from Hawaii's Town Summit Meeting were selected to go to Washington D.C. for U.S. Congressman Joe Kennedy's Children's Day, where they testified before Congress and were guests at the White House. As a result of the Town Summit Meeting, a Children's Advisory Council has been formed to provide practical youth input and to advise the Hawaii Legislature's Committee on Child and Human Services.

- In the **State of Florida**, legislation exists to enable localities to set up special taxing districts for children's issues. In **Bradenton** and **Stuart, Florida**, the *Making the Grade* Town Meetings were used as a mechanism to help gather support for such an initiative.

- Both **Fredericksburg** and **Alexandria, Virginia**, used their *Making The Grade* Town Summit Meetings to help set the agenda for their Youth Commissions.

Many communities recognized the need to bring community services directly to families. Therefore, rather than relying on needy individuals finding and seeking out such help from around the community, the community services need to be brought directly to the neighborhood places in which youth and their families are found:

- In **Decatur, Illinois**, the community plans to use neighborhood places such as parks and recreation centers to bring services directly to youths and their families. For example, one evening, the Department of Human Services might be on-site; another evening, the employment agencies might be present.

- In **Bradenton, Florida**, community leaders will bring parent education courses to the workplaces, churches, temples and community centers.

Some state level activities resulted from *Making the Grade*. While the project did not preclude such activities, it was not designed for implementation at the state level. However, several states recognized the importance of the collaborative process, the needs assessment and the data collection, and initiated their own state level report cards, sent representatives to the local town meetings, or issued public statements in support of the project. For example:

- The **New York State** Department of Labor's Youth Advisory Council canvassed the state to determine where the community forums were being held, and sent staff to attend the meetings and to participate actively in the community efforts resulting from these meetings. The Governor's office supported these local efforts as part of their ten year children's agenda.

- **Kansas** and **North Dakota** developed and issued state level report cards. A community coalition in **Topeka, Kansas**, formed to sponsor their *Making The Grade* town meeting, is now advising the Governor on the formation of a State Office for Children and Families.

IDAHO STATEWIDE REPORT CARD		
ISSUE	**NATIONAL DATA**	**IDAHO DATA**
Number of Youth	21 million (12-17), in 1987.	170,000 (10-19)
Teen Pregnancy	Over 1 million (4.7%) teens (15-19) became pregnant in 1985.	1, 764 (2%) teens gave birth in 1987
Functional Illiteracy	50% of 17-year-olds cannot read well enough to understand high school materials.	34% of high school grads are marginally competent to understand materials beyond a 4th grade level.
School Dropouts	1 in 4 students do not graduate from high school with their classmates.	1 in 5 students do not graduate from high school with their classmates.
Juvenile Crime	1.8 million teens (9.5%) arrested.	6,531 teens (3.8%) arrested in 1987.
Substance Abuse: Marijuana	1 in 5 teens (12-17) used marijuana in 1988.	17% of teens have smoked marijuana.
Cocaine	1 in 25 teens (4%) used cocaine in 1988.	1% of teens have used cocaine.
Alcohol	1 in 2 teens (50%), 12-17, used alcohol in 1988.	72% of teens have used alcohol.
Youth Unemployment	Nearly 1.5 million (7.1%), 16-24, not in school are unemployed (twice as high as overall rate).	8,858 (5%) of teens 16-21 are unemployed.

- In **Idaho**, the State 4-H Office produced an extensive statewide report card. The annual meeting of Idaho's Commission for Children and Youth used the Idaho State and the National Report Card. (See above.)

- Many states' Governors' offices or Departments of Human Services helped to promote, assisted in, and attended the local Town Summit Meetings within their states. These included the **Missouri** Department of Social Services, the **Iowa** Department of Public Health, the **Arkansas** Department of Human Services, Office of Volunteerism, the **New York State** Council on Children and Families, and the Governors' Offices in **Indiana**, **Massachusetts**, **Colorado** and **Idaho**.

- The **Council of State Policy and Planning Agencies** (CSPA) is encouraging state teams in their Policy Academy on Families and Children At Risk to contact Town Summit Meeting leaders in communities to get important grass roots information to inform their policy development process.

A rich diversity of response and creative action was stimulated through this one project. The action plans emerging from the Town Summit Meetings are just beginning to take shape and trickle in to project headquarters. Preliminary feedback looks promising, as communities report on their future plans:

- In **Temple, Texas**, employers are working to enable parents to get involved with community and school issues, by proposing to handle parental leave for this purpose similar to leave for jury duty.

- In **Fresno, California**, at the end of the Town Summit Meeting, participants were given a postcard and asked to write what they personally committed to doing. "Fresno Tomorrow" is charged with follow-up and implementation of the Town Summit Meeting. In 3 to 4 months, the self-addressed post cards will be mailed to participants for self-checking on follow through.

- In many communities, including **Cleveland, Ohio; Kerrville, Texas; Omaha, Nebraska; Pensacola, Florida**; and **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**; community leaders are establishing local youth collaborations, to follow through on the agenda of *Making the Grade* and to continue developing the important communication avenues that were opened at the Town Summit Meetings.

- United Way of Laramie County in **Cheyenne, Wyoming** reports that as a result of their Town Meeting, adult and youth Steering Groups have been formed. A county-wide Essay Contest on Self-Esteem for all Junior and Senior High School students was held. Their next big goal is a state-wide Youth Conference in the summer, with representation from each high school.

- The **Fairfax County, Virginia** Department of Extension & Continuing Education, Virginia Cooperative Extension, reported that as a result of their Summit process, seven areas were identified for further analysis: 1) Informational Needs; 2) Educational Needs (formal and informal); 3) Parental Involvement; 4) Drugs; 5) Special Needs Youth; 6) Governmental Response; and 7) Community Response. A Follow-up Plan was developed by the Planning Committee for a "Summit II" in April 1990, with fifteen working group sessions within three tracks: Recreation and Enrichment Programs, Education and Information Needs, and Focus on High Risk Youth. In addition, "Mini-Summits" will be held throughout Fairfax County in 1990 to address specific needs and local collaboration.

- In **Davis County, Utah**, the regional PTA president, working with 4-H, coordinated four Town Summit Meetings and 28 related events. Local community cable TV aired the issues in the high schools; kids helped to write the script and acted in several of the spots. As a result of the Town Summit Meetings, Utah Advocates for Parents and Youth at Risk has been established, incorporated, and organized to assist with truancy and runaways. Already, schools and police are referring students for service. They plan to open an alternative school and shelter by September 1990. These community organizers were also instrumental in helping to launch the Governor's Displaced Youth Committee, composed of social services, juvenile justice, schools, parents and legislators. This Committee meets once a month, addressing one issue at a time. They are also drafting legislation for homeless and runaway youth.

FEEDBACK FROM TOWN SUMMIT MEETINGS

"The feedback from the Town Summit Meetings validated our belief that citizens in communities shared our concerns about the problems facing youth and that given a catalyst such as Making the Grade they could and would come together with energy, commitment and creativity to solve these problems."

Doni Blumenstock
Project Director
Making the Grade

"On reviewing the entire project and the results, it is apparent that what is needed is a coordinated strategy at all levels to address these interrelated issues."

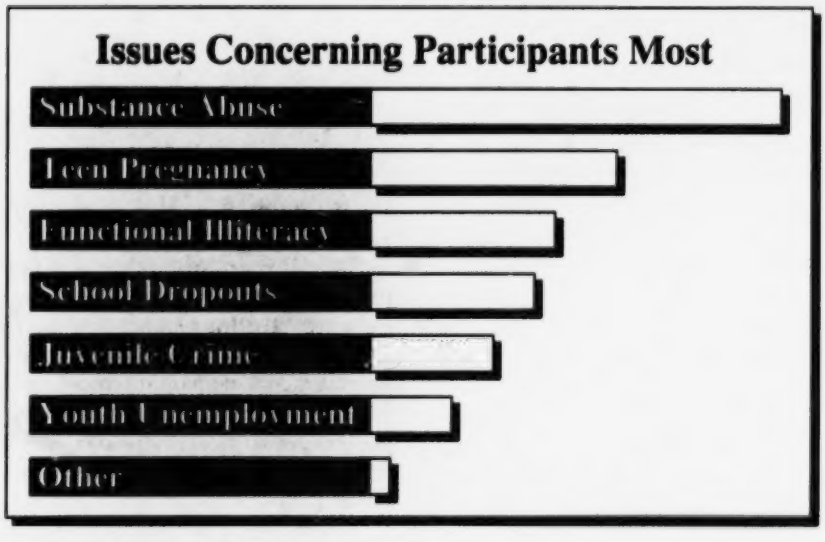
David S. Liederman
Chairman
National Collaboration for Youth

What were the greatest concerns to local communities as they came to grips with the issues and worked collaboratively on solutions and action plans? What barriers and unmet needs did they encounter, and how did they approach them? This section reports on the results tabulated from the nationwide evaluation conducted during the project. About 100 communities to date have submitted written evaluations of their efforts. Information generated from these communities was reviewed, compiled and analyzed to evaluate the process and the results. Following is a summary of feedback from participants concerning process, participation, and payoff.

Feedback on the Issues

Substance Abuse Was The Issue of Greatest Concern to Participants, by a 3:2 margin over the next highest issue. In rank order, those issues reported to concern participants most included:

1. Substance Abuse
2. Teen Pregnancy
3. Functional Illiteracy
4. School Dropouts
5. Juvenile Crime
6. Youth Unemployment
7. Other



Substance Abuse Was The Issue With the Most Services, by a 2:1 margin over the next most prevalent services. It is not surprising that the issues of highest concern to the communities were also those with the most services available. Clearly, given the statistics, those services are not sufficient. As one participant in the Fredericksburg, VA Town Summit Meeting said:

"If we have all these services, why does our local Report Card look like that?"

In rank order, those issues with the most services include:

1. Substance Abuse
2. Teen Pregnancy
3. Functional Illiteracy
4. School Dropouts
5. Juvenile Crime
6. Youth Unemployment
7. Other

Major Gaps In Services Still Exist. In response to the question about what were the major gaps in service, respondents cited the lack of coordination and the lack of public awareness on the issues. In addition, specific programs are often only able to serve a percentage of those in need. Lack of resources and inaccessibility were often cited as reasons.

Additional Issues Were Identified As Concerns to Communities. Eighty percent of respondents indicated that their participants identified issues in addition to those highlighted by the National Report Card. These issues included (in rank order):

1. Teen suicide
2. Abuse—physical, sexual and emotional
3. Latch-key children
4. Runaway children
5. Homelessness
6. Health and safety

Feedback on Collaboration

A Collaborative Approach Was Previously Used. About eighty percent of respondents indicated that there had been a collaborative approach to addressing two or more of the *Making the Grade* issues in their communities. They cited collaboration among education, human services, government, business, and other sectors.

More Collaboration is Needed. Eighty six percent of respondents thought that more collaboration is needed, and 84 percent thought the Town Summit Meeting process will lead to a more collaborative approach in their communities.

Feedback on Participation

"I don't think we've ever had all those people from those groups [50 organizations including schools, Cooperative Extension, social services, health agencies, business and youth programs] in one room at the same time."
Judy Stark
Cooperative Extension
Schoharie County, New York

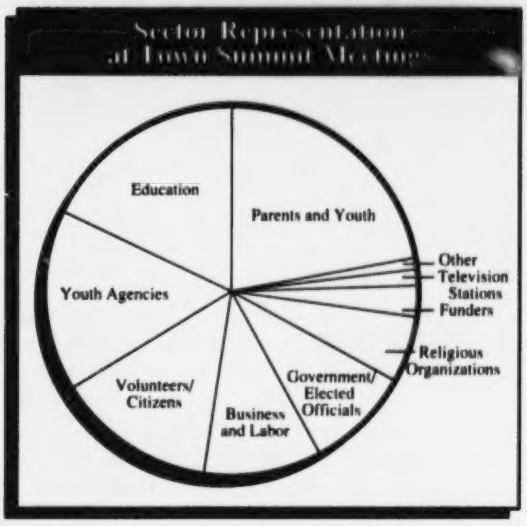
Participation Was Widespread and Turnout Exceeded Expectations. Based on feedback thus far, it is estimated that as many as **26,000 people nationwide participated in the Town Summit Meetings** and other *Making the Grade* community forums. The meetings ranged in size depending upon the community, with approximately 60 percent having between 50-100 participants. The average size of a Town Summit Meeting was between 65-70 participants.

About half of respondents indicated that their local ABC affiliate participated in their event.

All Sectors Were Represented. Respondents indicated participation by a broad cross section of community representatives, in rank order as follows:

1. Parents and Youth .....(22.7%)
2. Education.....(18.0%)
3. Youth Agencies .....(16.4%)
4. Volunteers/Citizens .....(15.4%)
5. Government/Elected Officials .(9.8%)
6. Business and Labor .....(7.6%)
7. Religious Organizations .....(5.8%)
8. Funders .....(2.1%)
9. Television Stations .....(1.5%)
10. Other .....(0.7%)

Some respondents indicated that they would have liked more participation by business, government, religious organizations, or by other key sectors. Some acknowledged that the limited participation by certain sectors may have been a function of scheduling difficulties (i.e., insufficient notice to mark date on calendar, or inability to commit to full-day meeting).



Feedback on Process

"I sit on five task forces, Teen Pregnancy, Substance Abuse, Youth Unemployment, etc., and they never talk to each other. We need this process, and we need it now."

Julie Adamcin
4-H Agent
Tucson, Arizona

"Our Town Summit Meeting was a terrific success! We had the whole town talking, which was our main objective. We are now talking of a crisis hotline, and the necessity for elementary school counselors. It seems that we are off to a good start."

Doris Albernaz
Ohio State Medical Association Auxiliary
Tiffin, Ohio

Planning Materials Were Useful. The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that the instructions, planning guidelines, materials and technical assistance provided by the National Collaboration for Youth were useful or extremely useful. Roughly seven out of ten respondents indicated that they used the agenda provided by the *Making the Grade* staff.

The Report Card Generated Greater Public Awareness. Four-fifths of respondents felt that the National Report Card generated greater public awareness of the *Making the Grade* issues. Similarly, four-fifths of the responding communities compiled a local report card as part of their community engagement process and found it useful or very useful.

The ABC Television Special Was A Motivator. Two-thirds felt that the ABC Television Special was a motivating force in their decision to participate in the project. Roughly ninety percent of respondents indicated that their Town Summit Meetings received media

attention, through newspaper articles and editorials, television and radio coverage.

Sufficient Lead Time Is Needed For Planning. Nine out of ten respondents felt that they needed three months (61 percent) to six months (29 percent) to plan and organize a successful Town Summit Meeting.

Of those responding, 90 percent believed that **the *Making the Grade* event accomplished their goals:** raising public awareness, developing action plans, working toward coordination, and bringing together all sectors.

Feedback on Recommendations

The recommendations for action agreed upon at the close of the Town Summit Meetings followed the goals set for their communities. Two of the most important goal categories listed were:

- **Increasing public awareness of the issues and educating the public** - the need to increase acknowledgement of the severity and widespread nature of the problems, to create greater awareness of the interrelatedness of the issues, to inform the community better about the availability of resources, and to encourage the media to provide good role models and to assist with raising public awareness and the need for support for youth services.

- **Improving coordination of youth services in the community** - the need to improve communication among agencies serving youth, and among sectors such as parents , private agencies, government, business and education; the need for interagency cooperation, often cited as particularly important to improve service coverage, reduce duplication, and prevent turf struggles; the need for support networks within and among issue areas to encourage sharing of resources and knowledge and to enable advocacy.

Action plans received often indicated communities organizing formal collaborations to accomplish the above goals.

More specific recommendations emerging from Town Summit Meetings in rank order were:

1. **Parent Education/Involvement** - Specific program ideas included:
   - Helping parents to understand that parenting skills can be learned and providing parenting education in high schools.
   - Providing parenting education at church, temple, the workplace and in community centers.
   - Increasing parental involvement in children's education through such initiatives as release time from work for school conferences, or providing evening hours for conferences.
   - Improving PTA/PTO outreach, moving meetings to neighborhoods instead of strictly school sites.
   - Establishing parenting resource centers in schools.
   - Increasing parent awareness of community resources.
   - Creating parent support networks.

2. **Enhancing School Programs** - Respondents suggested:
   - Increasing the number of guidance counselors.
   - Adding alternative education programs.
   - Strengthening and developing dropout prevention programs and enforcing school attendance laws.
   - Decreasing student/teacher ratios.
   - Requiring youth to stay in school in order to receive and keep a driver's license.

- Strengthening the relationship between curriculum and the world of work.
- Developing tutoring programs and homework hotlines.
- Improving linkages between teachers and community resources.
- Establishing life skills curricula.

3. **Resource Directories** - Many communities expressed the need for:
   - Creating information and referral service directories accessible to teens, parents and service providers through telephone contact or computers based at schools, libraries or community agencies.
   - Publishing teen yellow pages in small booklet forms or in pull out sections from newspapers.
   - Developing teen youth services communication through newsletters or youth pages in newspapers.

4. **Early Prevention** - Communities agreed that more resources need to be spent on prevention including:
   - Early detection of problems in school and family, emotional problems, learning disabilities, etc.
   - Buddy systems between high school students and children in middle and elementary schools and cross-age tutoring.
   - Human sexuality education.
   - Head Start type programs.

5. **Positive Youth Development** - Communities stressed the need for establishing:
   - Teen centers and teen parks with a multitude of services and programs available on site.
   - Youth director, commissioner or ombudsman to coordinate and expedite service delivery and development.
   - Youth community service programs for all youth including at-risk, not as a "punishment" but as an opportunity to make a contribution.
   - Leadership training programs for young people.
   - Expanded after school and weekend activities, including bringing community programs to school sites as well as community centers.
   - Targeted outreach programs for youth organizations to include more at-risk youth.

6. **Funding for Youth Services** - Respondents indicated a need for:
   - Additional funding.
   - Reallocation of existing resources.
   - Funding streams which encourage collaboration.

7. **Building Self-Esteem** - While many of the categories listed above will result in improved self-esteem, many respondents listed it as a separate recommendation, including the need for:
   - Involving youth in decision making.
   - Providing substantive roles for youth in community programs.
   - Improving youth communication skills.
   - Fostering specific programs to improve sense of self worth.

8. **More One-on-One Assistance** - Again, most of the above categories contain elements of this critical group of recommendations. Communities stressed the importance of:
   - Mentoring programs - a significant and consistent relationship between every youth and one or more caring adults.
   - Peer counseling.
   - Hotlines.

Finally, three-fourths of respondents said they would be interested in taking part in a follow-up Town Summit Meeting — the majority (61 percent) prefer follow up in one year, and some (15 percent) indicated they would like to follow up in two years.

What Participants Said

The feedback cited above presents a picture of the collective sentiment of the participants of the Town Summit Meetings. However, by themselves, they do not reveal the whole picture. They cannot convey the depth of individuals' concern and commitment, the seriousness of the youths themselves, the tone and tenor of the meetings, the rich and thoughtful observations of concerned citizens. Following are some samples of what participants said at their Town Summit Meetings or reported to project staff through one-on-one discussions, letters and written comments on evaluation forms:

...About Young People

"How many of you [adults] can remember your high school days? Did you, every day, have to make a decision about whether you would take drugs or have sex?"

Nancy Osborne
Anchor/Reporter
ABC Channel 30 KFSN-TV
Fresno, California

"You cannot possibly make [these kids] hurt anymore on the outside than they hurt on the inside."

Marty Weill
Volunteer working with youths
Lawrence County, Ohio

"Every student is at risk. It happens across all economic levels. It happens among all races."

Wanda Bigham
President of Marycrest College
Davenport, Illinois

"I think as a nation we have lost sight of the fact that these kids are important — all of them."

Donald Lemay
Participant
Carlsbad, California

"Until we recognize that every child has a gift or talent and we tap into it and make them productive citizens, then we are going to have youth with low self esteem and lack of motivation, getting into a lot of trouble."

Jane Hubbell
Executive Director
Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Harrisonburg, Virginia

"The general conclusion to this day was that if students stayed in school, there would be less trouble; the teens need to know where and how to get help. The kids need to have a good self image and self esteem. They need to be recognized for doing good, not for doing bad."

Libby Espejo
Eighth Grade Student
St. Joseph Grade School
Tiffin, Ohio

...About The Problems

"I think we just have too many complacent parents out there. Our parents need to take a more active interest in our children. The schools and the agencies can only do so much."

Howard Peterson
School Board President
Bettendorf, Illinois

"We need to reach the parents who need us most — and they won't come to school. They may not remember schools as a place where they experienced success. We need to take parent education programs to them — to churches, to community centers, and to the workplace."

Participant
Pensacola, Florida

"We don't have role models to come and tell us how they became successful."

Yardley Wing
High School Student
Booneville, Missouri

"Public schools used to consider these "someone else's problems" — the churches, the justice system, for example. Now we know teachers need to help young people in many aspects of their lives. It is difficult to teach students who have social and economic problems."

John Brock
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Lexington, Kentucky

"We have allowed an illegal drug economy to develop, and it is one of the most equal opportunity employers around. Traditional programs will not be able to combat that. We need to build in systems to create hope."

Nathaniel McCaslin
Professor of Social Work
Western Michigan University

"Adults are the biggest problem with youth today. We can strike at the core of these problems if we decide as a community what our values are and get that message straight."

Barbara Arnett
Participant
Warren County, Virginia

"We could build ten Vietnam Memorials to people who die from tobacco, alcohol and drugs each year."

Participant
Valley Forge, Pennsylvania

"A telephone operator gets more training for her job than a parent does."

Barbara Brownell
Participant
Bradenton, Florida

"If we don't take the time today with our kids, they're not going to take the time with their children. Then things will never get better."

Bill Saylor
Executive Director
Boys and Girls Club
Carlsbad, California

...About The Solutions

"You can't tell a kid to say no unless you create an environment in which it is possible for him to say no."

Ben Love
Chief Scout Executive
Boy Scouts of America

"We will pay for them preventively or we will pay for them in crime-fighting, drug abuse and welfare."

Barbara Watt
Department of Social Services
Schoharie County, New York

"We would like to focus, in this order, on prevention, intervention, and reaction. We think that is probably in the reverse order now."

Shirley Brown
Assistant to the City Manager
Sioux City, Iowa

"We need to be able to deal with the individual child. For some children, the schoolroom is the only structure in their lives."

Sandy Hammer
Teacher of the Year
Bradenton, Florida

"Without the support of other youths, we won't get anywhere."

Wes Allison, Age 18
Texas 4-H President

"The proposals are going to take a lot of work, but there is hope."

Anita Zielinski, Age 15
Member of ACTIVE, a group working to promote volunteerism
Athens, Ohio

Feedback From Town Summit Meetings

...About Collaboration

"We have to realize that these are all of our concerns. These are not parents' problems, kids' problems or the schools' problems. These are everyone's concerns."

Fariba Pendleton
4-H Youth Development Agent
Douglas County (Superior), Wisconsin

"It's amazing that even in such a small community there is so much going on and so many people doing things that we were not even aware of."

Participant
Bradenton, Florida

"This is the finest meeting of its type ever held in the City of San Bernardino."

The Honorable Bob Holcomb
Mayor of San Bernardino, California

"We hope that, with a cross section of thinkers in our community, people who are involved with kids in a variety of ways, we will come up with an action plan and a way to proceed."

Karen Keller
Coordinator
Youth Services Consortium
Kalamazoo, Michigan

"Our Making The Grade Next Step has met on a regular basis since December. It has been a good opportunity for networking. A community substance abuse task force meets regularly and a sub-committee of Making The Grade Next Step, is preparing to implement parenting classes in the local schools and industry."

Doris Albernaz
First Vice President
Ohio State Medical Association
Auxiliary

...About The Project

"This is the best meeting we've ever had. We should have done this years ago."

Participant
Bradenton, Florida

"Making The Grade" was a stimulus to renew or undertake significant efforts on behalf of youth. A continued national focus on the issue of youth at risk will be appreciated as we try to facilitate and coordinate our local activities."

Karen Keller
Coordinator
Youth Services Consortium
Kalamazoo, Michigan

"We feel that our meeting was a great success and that was due primarily to the materials provided by the National Collaboration for Youth. We could not have done it without NCY's excellent guidance."

Marnie MacDonald
Marketing Specialist, 36 WTVQ
Lexington, Kentucky

"It's one of the first times in Greenville people are not looking at who's white, who's rich or who's poor. Instead, they're concerned with the real problem. Our kids are in trouble! What can we do to help our kids?"

Susie Brown
Participant
Washington County, Mississippi

"This is the first time I have been in a room with so many adults — community leaders — who share my concerns. I didn't know that many adults cared. I am very hopeful."

Murphy Pepper, Age 16
Participant
Alexandria, Virginia

Alexandria, Virginia
Town Summit Meeting On Youth

Overview

The Alexandria Youth Services Commission, along with 25 community groups and businesses, sponsored an all-day Town Summit Meeting on Saturday, September 23, 1989. The purpose of the Town Summit Meeting was to raise public awareness about the current and future state of Alexandria's children, youth and families. Through the town meeting's plenary and workshop sessions, more than 160 citizens, youth public officials and youth serving professionals came together to reach community consensus on youth-related issues, and to develop strategies necessary to address them.

The Community Coalesces

Concerned Alexandrians searched for concrete solutions to the ills faced by their children. Elected officials sat next to parents and engaged in open and robust debate about the future of their youth. Young people gave first-hand accounts of the struggles in their lives, and helped devise ways to address the threats to their well-being. All views were aired. City and private non-profit agency staff and board and commission representatives turned aside turf battles to work toward a blueprint for the city's focus on youth issues in the coming decade.

Results

Recommendations emerged from the workshops on topics including Adolescent Pregnancy, Cultural Diversity/Racism, Education (Dropouts/Illiteracy), Juvenile Delinquency, Substance Abuse, and Youth Employment.

Guidance was offered to the Youth Services Commission on how to coordinate the proposed goals. The Alexandria, Virginia Youth Services Commission, begun in 1979, used the Town Summit Meeting to help set their agenda for the short and long term. Their substantial final report will be presented to the Mayor and City Council for approval and funding in April 1990.

Unique Features

This Town Summit Meeting not only worked to develop recommended action plans, but even more important, they thought through how they would measure when/whether they had attained some of their goals. In response to the question "When will you know that your recommendations have been achieved?" participants stated:

- When the recommendations have been published with schedules for completion, tasks, and assignments for responsibility.
- When pilot groups have been formed to track the progress of the proposed projects and they report on the progress of the goals set today.
- When quarterly reports are published by the Office on Youth Services.
- When the statistics published in the background paper improve, that is, when teen pregnancy and drug use decline.

Temple/Belton Texas "Connecting For Youth"

Overview

Nine months of community planning went into Temple's exemplary conference, Connecting for Youth. The process, led by the Junior League had started before *Making the Grade*, and was subsequently enlarged with assistance from 4-H to examine all of the issues, thoroughly.

The Community Coalesces

Approximately 270 people, representing all sectors, gathered for two days to discuss the issues that impact their youth, and work toward developing a community-wide action plan to reduce the problems. Extensive background materials were provided to participants in advance of the meeting, including a comprehensive, locally developed Report Card, a community planning workbook, a booklet of program models titled "Texas Dreams Come True," research data on at-risk youth, results of a youth at risk services and program survey, and a lengthy resource list of programs and services in Temple/Belton, compiled by surveying over 350 agencies, schools and organizations.

Results

Task Forces were formed to work to eradicate or ameliorate the following conditions:

Dysfunctional Family
Peer Pressure
Confused Value System
Low Self Esteem
Lack of Support Services
Apathy
Socio-economic Factors
Inability of Traditional School System to Cope
Availability and Tolerance for Substance Abuse
Role Models (Poor or Lack of)
Inadequate Parenting Skills
Lack of Responsible Media

These Task Forces are all represented on Temple's newly formed Connecting for Youth Council. The Council was developed to serve as a catalyst in the community, to coordinate, identify, and develop programs addressing problems for youth. In their standing rules, they clearly state: "although the Council may concern itself with any problem that is important to the people and program area committee, the Council shall not duplicate the efforts of other organizations in the community."

Unique Features

- The Conference began with a musical and drama production staged by a local high school group. The entire conference was videotaped.
- Temple's survey of community resources asked questions about the programs, the clients (their characteristics, and numbers served), the limitations (space, funding, staffing, etc.) so that the small groups would know which programs were underutilized, in great demand, replicable, and so forth.

Rockford, Illinois Convenes All-Youth Town Summit Meetings

Overview

In Rockford, Illinois, the Mayor's Youth Policy Advisory Council hosted a Town Summit Meeting, as a result of which, the local youth decided to convene their own town meeting. And, when these youth decided that young people who had experienced one or more of the six problems should be asked for their input, Rockford held an **all at-risk youth Town Summit Meeting.**

The Community Coalesces

The youth participating in the Rockford all at-risk youth Town Summit Meeting had varied experiences — some came from alternative schools, where some were working on earning their GED, some were on probation, some were pregnant or parenting teens, and some were in drug and alcohol treatment programs. All wanted to help not just themselves, but others in the community as well, so that others might not have it so rough. Creative ideas flowed in all six issue areas, especially in the area of Youth Recreation, where the at-risk youth gave Rockford a failing grade. The Mayor of the city took note; portions of the Town Meeting were featured on the local ABC nightly news, and the community is already working on some of the solutions. These at-risk youth were straightforward and honest. Their message was summed up by one participant:

"If we let the really little kids know how bad it can get, maybe they'll never want to start."

Results

Plans are underway for Rockford youth to design and the community to build a teen park. The city is working with the youth to locate an appropriate site.

Rockford's Report Card exemplifies the quality of their effort and their commitment.

Report Card

How well are we doing toward solving the problems facing Rockford Area youth?

Subject	Grade
Functional Illiteracy Comments: 30% of local students do not have enough basic academic skills to compete successfully for a job.	I
Juvenile Crime Comments: 17% of local crime is committed by youth age 16 and under.	I
School Dropouts Comments: One in three local students drop out of school.	I
Substance Abuse Comments: 8 out of 10 youth drink alcohol; 50% have tried marijuana.	I
Teenage Pregnancy Comments: 1 out of 12 females become pregnant before they are 20.	I
Youth Unemployment Comments: 14% of our local youth are unemployed.	I

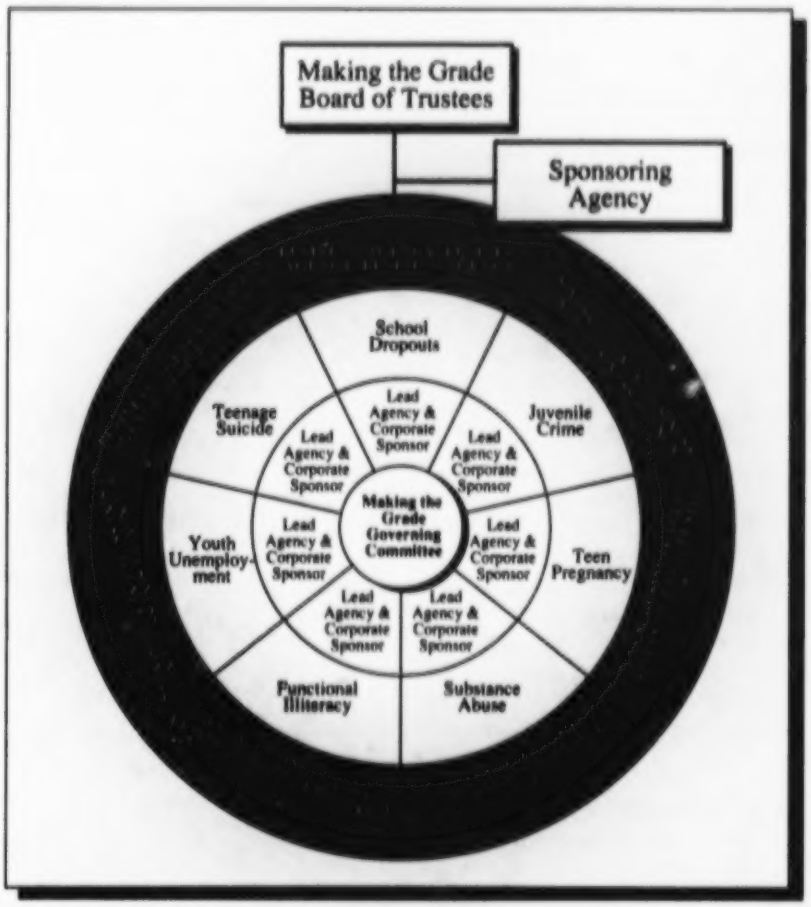
The "I" represents an "Incomplete" grade. Participants at each Town Summit Meeting developed their own set of grades.

Oklahoma City Creates A Youth Coalition Called *Making The Grade*

As a result of their Town Summit Meeting, and the recommendations of the drafting committee, Oklahoma City is creating a youth coalition, called *Making the Grade*. For each issue, there will be a lead agency, which must meet certain criteria of demonstrable skill and expertise in addressing the problem. That lead agency will be responsible for developing the strategy, coordinating efforts, and working with other agencies, organizations and businesses on the seven key issue areas identified:

School Dropouts
Juvenile Crime
Teen Pregnancy
Substance Abuse
Functional Illiteracy
Youth Unemployment
Teenage Suicide

A corporate sponsor is to be recruited for each of the seven problem areas, in order to fully engage the business community. The corporations will be asked to sponsor public service advertisements, lend executives, and provide financial support. Their organizational structure looks like this:



LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

The level of community interest and involvement in the *Making the Grade* Project exceeded all original expectations. In so doing, the initiative has left a legacy that will continue beyond the formal federally and privately funded project life. While this project was designed to address six critical issues facing our young people today, communities grappled with some of the broader, underlying causes and crosscutting issues that contribute to these problems. Following are highlights of the lessons learned from communities participating in *Making The Grade*, and their implications for action:

- **Communities consistently cited effective parenting as a universal theme and an essential ingredient to alleviate many other problems.** They acknowledged that times have changed, and family circumstances are vastly different than they were years ago. They pointed to a lack of parenting support systems and a lack of parenting skills. They noted that those who most need these skills and supports may not voluntarily seek them.

  The implications for action are that parenting education is needed in the high schools and in the community at large. Effective parenting education needs to be integrated into other program efforts. Parental involvement with their children must be encouraged, and communities must find ways to reach those parents who are not involved or who need additional support.

- **Communities consistently emphasized the need for education systems to be more aware of and responsive to current needs.** They acknowledged that schools are expected to do more in our contemporary society with insufficient resources, and that too often our traditional schools are using old models to teach new kids. They further acknowledged that schools should not be expected to solve all of society's problems, and they should not be expected to work unaided.

  The implications for action are that improving the responsiveness of schools is a community-wide responsibility, requiring greater resources and more collaborative efforts among education, government, business, labor, the media, community and voluntary organizations, parents, and the youths themselves.

- **Respondents consistently reported that they discovered how little they knew about what was going on in their own communities.** They were often surprised to learn that the issues being discussed were not exclusive to "somebody else's kids" but were real and immediate issues for their own youths. Similarly, these communities were also surprised to learn of all of the other groups and organizations in their communities who were concerned about, and actively working to remedy, these problems. They noted that the present

system and funding streams often encourage turf protection and separateness rather than collaboration. Communities expressed the need for help with collaboration.

The implications for action are that more communication and collaboration are essential at the federal, state and community levels. We need to find mechanisms to encourage, foster, and institutionalize communication and collaboration among community services and resources, by promoting interagency policies, programs and other crosscutting efforts.

- **Communities told us that the media were instrumental in raising public awareness and facilitating broad-based mobilization toward a mutual collective effort.** They provided a powerful vehicle for advancing public policy agendas in a responsible and objective manner. They also played a critical role in helping to keep the issues in the public eye and to sustain momentum toward viable solutions. However, communities also expressed concerns that some messages given through TV, advertising, magazines, and other media glamorize alcohol and other drug use, casual sex, and other undesirable behaviors.

  The implications for action are that the media can play a substantial role in helping to address social policy issues at the community, state and national level. We will need to encourage their responsible portrayal of these issues and urge them to deploy their powerful influence as a resource in helping to raise public awareness and mobilize action to help our nation's youth. Public policymakers may want to consider building in the media as a partner on other social policy initiatives.

- **A common theme among the communities was the need to devote programmatic and policy resources to prevention rather than more costly and more difficult cures.** While they were concerned with program oriented issues such as substance abuse or teen pregnancy, they also recognized the need for structural types of responses, including early preventive strategies, service coordination through the creation of umbrella organizations and clearinghouses, resource directories, and other communication tools.

  The implications for action are that both programmatic and structural actions are needed and should be encouraged. The federal government and the states could promote these actions through changes in funding mechanisms and through incentives to encourage preventive measures and promote collaborative processes. Likewise, communities may need to institute their own coordinating mechanisms, such as youth bureaus or councils to facilitate the crosscutting program and policy responses needed.

- **Youth serving organizations discovered that they were sometimes perceived as not reaching the youth most in need of their services.** There was limited understanding of the diversity and wealth of their programs for addressing serious youth issues.

  The implication for action is that youth serving organizations need to heighten the visibility of what they do and to increase their targeted outreach. Schools and government agencies can cooperate with youth serving organizations by identifying and referring youth in need of programs and services. Youth agencies can make their programs and services more accessible by providing them at school sites.

Lessons Learned and Implications for Action

- **The community engagement and mobilization process requires sufficient flexibility to allow tailoring to communities' individual needs; sufficient lead time to identify and involve the stakeholders; and sufficient leadership commitment at the local level to maintain and sustain momentum.** Even with all of these factors in place, the larger urban areas proved significantly more difficult to mobilize due to their political, social and logistical challenges.

  The implications for action are that "business as usual" will not be sufficient to engage and mobilize communities into action and redirect the unacceptable negative trends. The collaborative process can be catalyzed through outside intervention. Understanding the delicate balance between providing sufficient time to allow community dynamics to play out and providing a sense of urgency and real deadlines is essential in order to promote prompt action. National voluntary youth-serving organizations with broad local constituencies are a natural resource to provide such assistance. For the larger urban areas, it may be necessary to divide them into smaller neighborhood cohorts, congregating around some established community institution such as a school or community center.

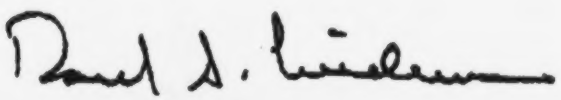
CONCLUSION AND AFTERWORD

The message from *Making The Grade* is clear. All sorts of things impact on kids during each day as they interact at home, study in school, and work and play in the community at large. While each of these institutions and the caring individuals within them may interact with only one aspect of the child's life, the simple truth is that they are all serving the same child. While it is evident that a hungry, sick, homeless, or substance-dependent youth is a poor student or a poor worker, we have not yet managed to coordinate our service delivery systems to deal with the whole person. While it is obvious that prevention of these problems is cheaper, easier and more effective than treating them later on, we have not yet managed to reallocate our national resources accordingly. While it is clear that there are programs that work and policies that support them in communities everywhere, we have not yet managed to spread these promising practices to a more universal scope. And, it is clear that while we continue to operate in a fragmented fashion, when we fail to make the grade, it is the youth of our country who pay the price.

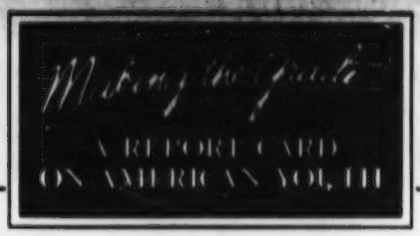
Making The Grade showed that we can collectively, collaboratively change this picture. Already, in communities across this country, countless young people have been helped who would have gone unserved. And the magic of this elevates us all, lifts our aspirations, and advances the family of man. But we must do a better job of coordinating our efforts, at the federal, state and local levels.

The lessons from *Making The Grade* — about the need for more effective and well-integrated parenting education, about our need to make our educational system more responsive to contemporary realities, and about the imperatives of improving community collaboration — are important to our nation's Capital and to every single community across this land. Time and time again during this project, we saw citizens and institutions — undaunted by the severity of the problems — producing good ideas about helping their communities' kids. It's time they had the resources to do what they know how to do.

And time and time again the young people told us that they relish a role and they value the responsibility. We should recognize them as resources and employ their energies.



David S. Liederman
Chair
National Collaboration for Youth
Executive Director
Child Welfare League of America



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More than forty national organizations participated in this project, provided advice and guidance, and helped to publicize it through their assorted media channels. These organizations are listed individually in Appendix B, but we would like to acknowledge their input and insights collectively as well.

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Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official policy of the sponsoring or participating organizations.

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List of Communities Participating in *Making The Grade*

Alaska
- Anchorage

Alabama
- Birmingham
- Mobile
- Montgomery

Arkansas
- Batesville
- Hot Springs
- Jonesboro
- Lonoke
- Marianna
- Morrilton
- Nashville
- Pine Bluff
- Sheridan

Arizona
- Phoenix
- Tuscon

California
- Carlsbad
- Fresno
- Huntington Beach
- Los Angeles
- Rohnert Park
- Sacramento
- San Bernardino
- San Diego
- Stockton

Colorado
- Colorado Springs
- Delta
- Denver
- Fort Morgan
- Longmont
- Pueblo
- Sterling

Connecticut
- Hartford
- New Haven
- Stamford

District of Columbia

Delaware
- Georgetown

Florida
- Bartow
- Bradenton
- Callahan
- East Palatka
- Fort Myers
- Gainesville
- Mayo
- Milton
- Monticello
- Naples
- Pensacola
- Sarasota
- Sefner
- St. Petersburg
- Stuart
- Tallahasee
- West Palm Beach

Georgia
- Atlanta
- Columbus
- Macon
- Snellville
- Sylvester
- Thomson
- Valdosta
- Waynesboro

Hawaii
- Honolulu

Iowa
- Ames
- Cedar Rapids
- Dubuque
- Fort Dodge
- Iowa City
- Mason City
- Sioux City
- Waynesboro

Idaho
- Boise
- Burley
- Caldwell
- Coeur D'Alene
- Donnelly
- Idaho Falls
- Lewiston
- Malad
- Moscow
- Pocatello

Illinois
- Alsip
- Bloomington
- Charleston
- Chicago
- Decatur
- East Moline
- Edwardsville
- Hillsboro
- Joliet
- Lincoln
- Metropolis
- Morris
- Murphysboro
- Peoria
- Rockford
- Springfield
- St. Charles
- Wheaton
- Yorkville

Indiana
- Fort Wayne
- Indianapoiis
- Terre Haute

Kansas
- Columbus
- Russell
- Scott City
- Topeka
- Wichita

Kentucky
- Danville
- Edmonton
- Georgetown
- Glasgow
- Grayson
- Horse Cave
- Lebanon
- Lexington
- Louisville
- Nicholasville
- West Liberty

Louisiana
- Chalmette
- Lafayette
- Ruston
- St. Francisville
- Unice

Massachusetts
- Boston
- Sudbury

Maryland
- Greenbelt

Maine
- Augusta
- Brewer
- Lewiston

Michigan
- Ann Arbor
- Detroit
- Flint
- Ithaca
- Lansing
- Kalamazoo
- Marshall
- Muskegon
- Mt. Pleasant
- Southfield

Minnesota
- Bemidji
- Benson
- Duluth
- Luverne
- St. Paul

APPENDIX A

Missouri
- Boonville
- Charleston
- Columbia
- Jefferson City
- Kansas City
- Lamar
- Poplar Bluff
- Springfield
- St. Joseph

Mississippi
- Ackerman
- Bay Springs
- Bay St. Louis
- Canton
- Columbia
- Columbus
- DeKalb
- Gulfport
- Hernando
- Holly Springs
- Horn Lake
- Laurel
- Magnolia
- Meadville
- Newton
- Olive Branch
- Pascagoula
- Pontotoc
- Prentiss
- Quitman
- Southaven
- Walls
- Wiggins
- Winona

Montana
- Bozeman
- Great Falls

North Carolina
- Asheville
- Charlotte

North Dakota
- Devils Lake
- Fargo
- Martin
- Stanley

Nebraska
- Lincoln
- Omaha

New Hampshire
- Keene
- Manchester

New Jersey
- Hunterdon
- West Deptford

New Mexico
- Albuquerque

Nevada
- Las Vegas

New York
- Canton
- Cobleskill
- Elizabethtown
- Governeur
- Massena
- Plainview
- Plattsburgh
- Potsdam
- Star Lake

Ohio
- Akron
- Athens
- Cincinnati
- Cleveland
- Columbus
- Ironton
- Middletown
- Portsmouth
- Sandusky
- Tiffin
- Toledo
- Warren
- Youngstown

Oklahoma
- El Reno
- Hobart
- Hollis
- Magnum
- McAlester
- Muskogee
- Oklahoma City
- Norman
- Paul's Valley
- Poteau
- Shawnee
- Tulsa
- Wewoka

Pennsylvania
- Bellefonte
- Clairton
- Emporium
- Erie
- Lancaster
- Pittsburgh
- Valley Forge
- Wilkes-Barre

South Carolina
- Columbia
- Sumter

South Dakota
- Hot Springs
- Rapid City
- Sioux Falls

Tennessee
- Chattanooga
- Memphis
- Nashville

Texas
- Amarillo
- Bastrop
- Beaumont
- Belton
- Brownsville
- Bryan
- Dallas
- Denison
- El Paso
- Galveston
- Houston
- Kerrville
- Lubbock
- Lufkin
- Robstown
- San Antonio
- Temple
- Orange
- Ozona
- Victoria
- Waco

Utah
- Bountiful
- Castle City
- Coalville
- Delta
- Duchesne
- Farmington
- Fillmore
- Layton
- Loa
- Manti
- Provo
- Richfield
- Salt Lake City
- St. George
- Woods Cross
- Vernal

Vermont
- Essex Junction

Virginia
- Alexandria
- Arlington
- Fairfax
- Fredericksburg
- Front Royal
- Hampton
- Harrisonburg
- Lebanon
- Lynchburg
- Norfolk
- Virginia Beach

Washington
- Spokane

West Virginia
- Huntington

Wisconsin
- Eau Claire
- Fond du Lac
- Superior

Wyoming
- Casper
- Cheyenne

Making The Grade National Participating Organizations

National Collaboration For Youth
- American Red Cross
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America
- Boy Scouts of America
- Boys Clubs of America
- Camp Fire
- Child Welfare League of America
- 4-H
- Future Homemakers of America
- Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
- Girls Clubs of America
- The National Network of Runaway and Youth Services
- The Salvation Army
- United Neighborhood Centers of America
- YMCA of the U.S.A.
- YWCA of the U.S.A., National Board

The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, Inc.

Texas Collaboration for Youth

Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS)
- A joint project of Capital Cities/ABC and Public Broadcasting Service

Other Participating National Organizations
- American Association for Adult and Continuing Education
- American Association of University Women
- American Association of School Administrators
- American Federation of Teachers
- American Medical Association Auxiliary
- American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation
- Association of Junior Leagues
- ASPIRA
- Center for Population Options
- Children's Defense Fund
- Cities in Schools
- Correctional Education Association
- Education Commission of the States
- General Federation of Women's Clubs
- INAME Foundation
- International Reading Association
- Joint Action in Community Service
- League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
- National Alliance of Business
- National Association of Private Industry Councils (NAPIC)
- National Association of School Psychologists
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Association of Service and Conservation Corps
- National Association of State Boards of Education
- National Catholic Education Association
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National Council de la Raza
- National Crime Prevention Council
- National Education Association
- National Foundation for the Improvement of Education
- National Governors' Association
- National League of Cities
- National Prevention Implementation Project
- National Puerto Rican Forum
- National School Boards Association
- National Urban League
- National Youth Employment Coalition
- SER-Jobs for Progress
- 70,001 Training & Employment Institute
- United States Chamber of Commerce
- United Way of America
- VOLUNTEER - The National Center
- Women in Community Service
- W.T. Grant Foundation Commission on Youth and America's Future
- Youth Policy Institute
- Youth Service America

The National Collaboration for Youth

The National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) is a coalition of fifteen of the largest national youth-serving organizations in the country. Established in 1973, the NCY is an "affinity group" of The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, Inc., an association of national non-profit human service organizations. The members of the Collaboration are national organizations with local affiliates around the country. With the help of millions of volunteers, these groups operate a wide range of successful youth development programs serving over 30 million young people.

Mission

The Collaboration's mission is to enhance the ability of each member organization to serve youth effectively. Through its member organizations, the NCY works to improve the conditions for young people in American and to help young people to function effectively and grow into responsible adults. Towards these ends, the NCY engages in activities which:

- Provide opportunities for Collaboration members to share information related to serving young people and to leading and managing organizations;
- Raise the level of public awareness of the needs and contributions of young people and youth-serving agencies;
- Develop increased resources devoted to the service of youth; and
- Empower youth to participate effectively with adults in activities and decisions which affect them.

The NCY currently is involved with two special programs: *Making the Grade*, a public education campaign on the status of American youth, and The Seabreeze Awards, which recognize young people for community service.

Areas of Concern

The National Collaboration for Youth provides a forum for member agencies to come together to discuss issues and develop programs in areas of mutual concern. When there is consensus, the group promotes public policies to address these issues. The NCY has focused on issues including:

Adolescent pregnancy
Child care
Child sexual abuse
Education
Homeless youth
Juvenile delinquency
School dropouts
Substance abuse
Youth employment
Youth service

Members of the National Collaboration for Youth

American Red Cross
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America
Boy Scouts of America
Boys Clubs of America
Camp Fire
Child Welfare League of America
4-H
Future Homemakers of America
Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
Girls Incorporated
(formerly Girls Clubs of America)
The National Network of Runaway and Youth Services
The Salvation Army
United Neighborhood Centers of America
YMCA of the U.S.A.
YWCA of the U.S.A., National Board

The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organization, Inc.

The National Assembly is an organizational network of national voluntary human service agencies collectively pursuing the mission of enhancing the ability of its members to accomplish their organizational goals, developing managementg and leadership capacities, advancing and advocating for that sector of human services which operates under voluntary auspices, and improving conditions which affect the quality of life of those served by its members.

In furtherance of those purposes, The Assembly has agreed to three major goals:

- To provide opportunities for the continuing development and sharing of knowledge, skills and values needed to lead and manage national voluntary human service organizations effectively.

- To promote the implementation of public policies and programs and the development of resources which are responsive to the needs of human service organizations and those they serve.

- To increase the public visibility, understanding and acceptance of the human service sector, The National Assembly and its member organizations.

Founded in 1923, The National Assembly serves as a unified voice for ensuring that the knowledge and experience of voluntary agencies are taken into account as public policy on health and social service issues is developed; and provides opportunities for member organizations to exchange information needed to promote effective leadership of national voluntary human service and foster the evolution of charitable service to meet ever-changing community needs.

Members of the National Assembly include:

AFL-CIO, Dept. of Community Services
American Association of Homes for the Aging
American Camping Association
American Red Cross
Association for Volunteer Administration
Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies
Association of Junior Leagues, International
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America
Boy Scouts of America
Boys Clubs of America
Camp Fire, Inc.
Catholic Charities USA
Child Welfare League of America
Council of Jewish Federations
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
4-H, Extension Service
Family Service America
Future Homemakers of America
Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
Girls Incorporated (formerly Girls Clubs of America)
Goodwill Industries of America
Joint Action in Community Service
National Association of Homes for Children
The National Council on the Aging
National Crime Prevention Council
National Mental Health Association
The National Network of Runaway and Youth Services
The Salvation Army
70,001 Training & Employment Institute
Travelers Aid International
United Neighborhood Centers of America
United Seamen's Service
United Way of America
VOLUNTEER - The National Center
Volunteers of America
Women in Community Service
YMCA of the U.S.A.
YWCA of the U.S.A., National Board

Products Resulting From *Making The Grade*

The National Collaboration for Youth has developed a variety of materials to provide support and assistance to communities interested in the *Making The Grade* Project. These include:

Materials For *Making The Grade* Town Summit Meetings:

- A Report Card On American Youth
- Participant's Workbooks (including six Issue and Option Papers)
- Event Leader's Guide for Moderator and Small Group Discussion Leaders
- Introductory Videotape for Town Summit Meetings
- Training Videotape
- Videotape of September 14 Barbara Walters' ABC TV Special

Media/Communication Materials:

- USA Today Full-Page Ad
- Press Kit (Including Press Release dated September 6, 1989)
- *Making The Grade* Newsletter

***Making The Grade* Follow-Up Materials:**

- Follow-up Video (with clips of Town Summit Meetings)
- Discussion Guide
- Community Collaboration Handbook
- Report on the Nationwide Project

If you would like to learn more about *Making The Grade*, or obtain copies of available materials, call or write to:

The National Collaboration for Youth
1319 F Street N.W. Suite 601
Washington, DC 20004
Telephone: (202) 347-2080
FAX: (202) 393-4517

National Collaboration for Youth
1319 F Street, N.W. Suite 601
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 347-2080

CG

A REPORT CARD ON AMERICAN YOUTH

America is in the midst of a crisis. Our society's progress in eradicating the problems facing today's young people is far too slow. While most youth are succeeding and moving toward self-sufficient and productive futures, far too many are slipping through the cracks, their lives ruined by illiteracy, crime, school failure, drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, and unemployment. In short, as a nation, we are currently failing too many of our youth.

There are programs that work, and some communities have tackled these issues in a thoughtful and comprehensive way. But in spite of this, it is estimated that one in four adolescents is seriously at risk of not making a successful transition to adulthood. This *National Report Card* is a review of America's progress in solving the problems that are preventing too many of our young people from becoming productive workers and informed and responsible citizens. Awareness is a step in the right direction. Collaborative community action can move toward solving these interrelated problems. America must step up to the challenge to help our young people *Make the Grade*.

CE 022 584

Report Card:

How well is America doing toward solving the problems facing our youth?

Subject	Grade

Functional Illiteracy — F

Comments: 18% of U.S. High School graduates read below a 6th grade level.

Juvenile Crime — F+

Comments: In 1987, nearly 1.8 million juveniles were arrested.

School Dropouts — F+

Comments: One in four students drops out of school.

Substance Abuse — D-

Comments: Are leading cause of death to children to drug and alcohol related violence and automobile crashes.

Teenage Pregnancy — D-

Comments: 40% of young women become pregnant before they reach 20.

Youth Unemployment — D+

Comments: Youth unemployment is 3 Times the U.S. adult unemployment rate.

Grades are based on a poll of experts from *Making the Grade* participating organizations.

Making the Grade is a national and local level project designed to raise public awareness and stimulate collaborative action on behalf of America's youth. It is sponsored by the National Collaboration for Youth, a consortium of 15 major national youth serving organizations who together serve over 30 million young people, and a host of other organizations, associations and institutions.

While most young people are preparing to lead productive and responsible lives, it is estimated that one in four adolescents—about seven million youth—are seriously at risk of not making a successful transition from youth to adulthood. Another seven million may be at moderate risk. For these young people, the interrelated problems of functional illiteracy, juvenile crime, school dropouts, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and youth unemployment threaten to foreclose their futures. For our society, the costs of these problems, in human and financial terms, are unaffordable and unacceptable.

This *National Report Card* grades America on our progress in eradicating problems facing youth in the six areas noted above, and will be the focus of discussions at over 400 Town Summit Meetings organized as part of the Making the Grade project. At these Town Summit Meetings, community leaders and youth will gather to discuss the issues and develop collaborative action plans to address them. Components of the project include: *Technical Assistance, Written Materials and Training*, including "Issue and Option" papers on the six problem areas for local communities to use in their town summit meetings; and *Follow-up Activities* to publicize and support the implementation of community action plans.

ABC News will feature the issues covered by *Making the Grade* in a prime time news special on September 14, 1989, at 9:00 pm EDT.

All sectors of society must be involved in solving problems of this magnitude. While recognizing that much has been done, *Making the Grade* points to the *need for more coordinated efforts* to develop and implement viable solutions to the critical problems affecting youth, which will increase the chances that they will fulfill their potential as contributing members of society.

Support for this project was provided by the National Collaboration for Youth, The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS), The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Development Services, and the U.S. Department of Labor. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official policy of the sponsoring or participating organizations.

Functional Illiteracy F

Sixty percent of 17 year-olds are severely limited in their employment opportunities because of inadequate reading, writing and math skills. Functional illiteracy jeopardizes America's productivity, prosperity and competitiveness.

The Current Reality:

- Seven out of ten high school students cannot write an effective letter seeking employment or information.
- Three out of five twenty-year-olds cannot read a map or add up their lunch bill.
- One out of eight seventeen-year-olds is considered functionally illiterate; that is, they have reading and writing skills below the sixth-grade level.
- Just five percent of 11th graders can successfully read college-level material, only six percent can handle simple algebra, and barely one in three can place the Civil War in the correct half century.

Why It Is A Critical Problem:

For Young People. Studies show that a common characteristic of at-risk youth is limited basic skills: 68 percent of those arrested, 85 percent of unwed mothers, 79 percent of welfare dependents, 85 percent of dropouts, and 72 percent of the unemployed are functionally illiterate.

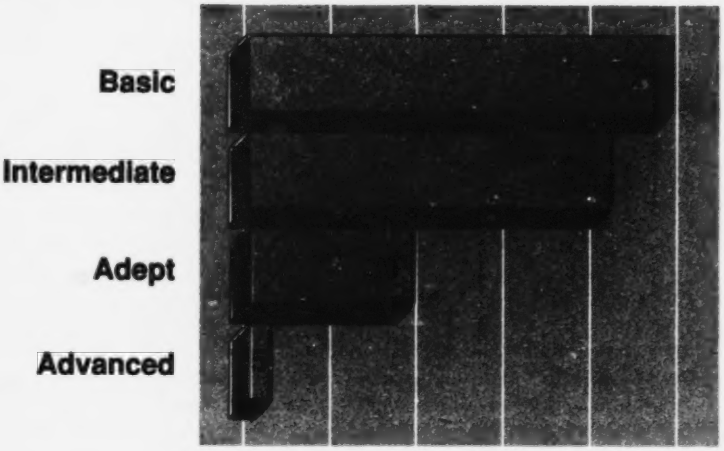
For Employers. Employers today demand a higher level of skills than ever before. In reading, most workers must be able to understand, summarize, and explain written materials on a range of subjects, such as those encountered in high school. Yet just over 60 percent of 17-year-old high school students — 1.9 million out of 3.6 million — cannot read well enough to function at this level. Among Hispanics, 80% are unable to read at this level; among Blacks, the proportion is 84%.

Both as consumers and workers, most adults need basic math skills. Many will need to find averages, interpret information drawn from graphs, and use logical reasoning to solve problems. An international evaluation of educational achievement in 12 countries found that students from the U.S. had the lowest scores in math and were out-matched substantially in science by Canadian and Korean students.

For Society. Most jobs that can be done by an illiterate can and will be done better and cheaper by a machine; therefore, illiterates are, by and large, unemployable and will remain unemployable. America cannot compete globally when our education achievement scores rank at or near the bottom in international comparisons with other developed countries. Our democratic system depends on our citizens' understanding of the issues. Functionally illiterate citizens cannot hope to comprehend increasingly complex public policy debates.

Implications For The Year 2000 And Beyond:

As employers' skill requirements are rising, a majority of 17-year-old high school students are weak in the reading and math skills they will need to successfully compete for jobs and education in the 21st Century. These skills deficiencies are costing America monetarily, through waste, lost productivity, increased remediation costs, reduced product quality, and ultimately a loss in competitiveness. What is at stake is our continued prosperity and our standard of living.



Percentage of In-School 17-Year-Olds At or Above Various Reading Proficiency Levels

Basic: Find information in a short paragraph

Intermediate: Recognize paraphrases of lengthy passages

Adept: Analyze moderately complicated passages about topics studied in high school

Advanced: Extrapolate ideas in specialized documents common in professional and technical work

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Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress. *The Reading Report Card* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1986) 16-17, 27.

Juvenile Crime

F+

Thirteen percent of teenagers account for almost half of all juvenile arrests. The average cost of housing one youth in a public juvenile facility is $27,000 per year.

The Current Reality:

- Juvenile crime, like adult crime, is rampant in our society. In 1987, nearly 1.8 million persons under the age of 18 were arrested for offenses ranging from murder to disorderly conduct. This is more than one arrest for every ten juveniles aged 14-17 in the U.S.
- More than 500,000 young people were held in public detention facilities in the U.S. at some time during 1987.
- Eighty-five percent of teenagers appearing in juvenile court are functionally illiterate.

Why It Is A Critical Problem:

For Young People. High crime rates take their toll on our nation's young people. Nearly two-thirds of violent crimes committed by 12-17 year olds involve victims under 18. Economic incentives are a strong inducement for juvenile crime and violence, which in turn creates a growing disconnection for these young people from their families, their schools and their communities. Insufficient and ineffective treatment and education opportunities prevent young people from breaking out of the cycle of delinquent behavior.

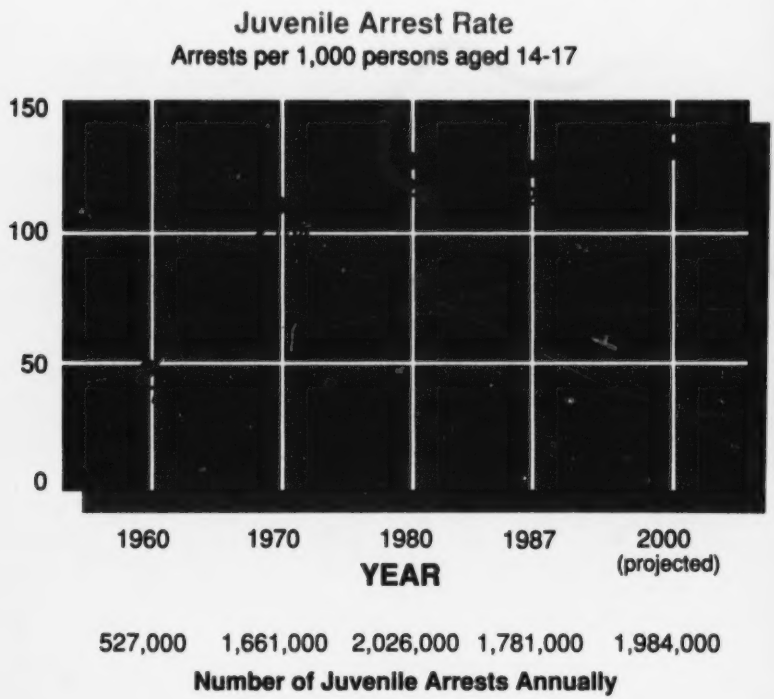
For Employers. The economic and social health of a community and its general business climate are greatly affected by people's perceptions of their safety, and their power to control their lives and their environments.

For Society. The economic and human costs of juvenile crime are substantial. Total expenditures to staff, operate and maintain public juvenile facilities totaled over $1.8 billion in 1984. It is cheaper to send a kid to Penn State than to the State Pen.

Implications For The Year 2000 And Beyond:

Juvenile crime skyrocketed during the 1960s and early 1970s. Crime rates have remained steady or even declined slightly since the late 1970s, but crime levels are far higher than they were thirty years ago. The total number of juvenile arrests in 1987 was more than triple the number recorded in 1960, and the juvenile arrest rate was more than double the 1960 rate.

If efforts to combat drug dealing and other forms of juvenile crime are not successful, there will be about 2 million juveniles arrested in the year 2000, and the arrest rate will rise from 124 to nearly 140 arrests per 1,000 persons aged 14-17.



Source: Calculations by Child Trends based on data from the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports: *Crime in the United States*, Annual.

School Dropouts

F+

One in four of our Nation's youth will not graduate from high school with his or her classmates. Each year's class of dropouts costs the nation about $260 billion in lost earnings and foregone taxes.

The Current Reality:

- About one million young people drop out of school each year. In June, 1986, 2.6 million students graduated from high school; yet there were 3.6 million 17 year olds in the population.
- In most inner-cities, the high school dropout rate is over 50 percent.
- The ratio of dropouts to prospective graduates is notably higher for men than for women — 30 per 100 versus 24 per 100.

Why It Is A Critical Problem:

For Young People. Unemployment rates for high school dropouts are more than twice those of high school graduates. Each individual dropout earns $200,000 to $260,000 less during his or her lifetime.

For Employers. It is increasingly difficult for employers to find workers capable of performing the work for which they are hired. Employers increasingly need a flexible and adaptable workforce, able to shift rapidly as foreign competition and technology eliminate some jobs while creating others. American industry will have to spend as much as $25 billion yearly on remedial education.

For Society. For each additional year of secondary education, there is a 35 percent reduction in the probability of welfare dependency in adulthood. Each year's class of dropouts will, over their lifetime, cost America about $260 billion in lost earnings and foregone taxes.

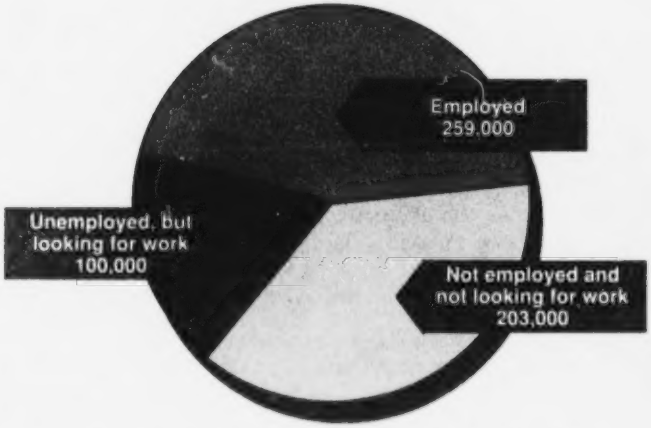
Implications For The Year 2000 And Beyond:

The ratio of dropouts to graduates has remained virtually unchanged for over a decade, in spite of a great deal of national, state and local, and public and private sector attention to education reform and improvement.

Many of those who fail to graduate on time are already handicapped when it comes to finding a job, learning a trade, or going to college. Statistics show that more than half of all new jobs created between 1984 and the year 2000 will require some education beyond high school, and almost a third will be filled by college graduates.

In the year 2000 and beyond, as the educational requirements of our society rise, a young person without a high school diploma will have a hard time finding any job, let alone one with wages high enough to support a family.

Employment and Unemployment of Persons Who Dropped Out of High School in 1985-86



Total persons who dropped out in 1985 = 562,000

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment of School-Age Youth, Graduates, and Dropouts*, various years.

Substance Abuse

D-

A total of 60 percent of young people, age 25 and under, have tried drugs. Alcohol and drug abuse cost America over $175 billion in 1983 in reduced productivity, treatment, crime, and related costs.

The Current Reality:

- Large numbers of youth have tried marijuana and alcohol, and a sizeable minority use these substances regularly. As of 1988, almost 1 of every 5 youngsters aged 12-17 had tried marijuana; 1 of 2 had tried alcohol.
- Among young adults aged 18-25, 56 percent, or almost 17 million, had tried marijuana. More than 20 percent, or almost 6 million, had used cocaine.

Why It Is A Critical Problem:

For Young People. Use of drugs and alcohol by youth is often implicated in motor vehicle crashes, violent and delinquent acts, and early sexual experience. Illicit drug use breeds dishonesty with parents and disrespect for the law. Regular use may impair school and job performance.

For Employers. Substance abuse is costly to employers, in terms of absenteeism, safety in the workplace, and overall productivity.

For Society. The costs to society of alcohol and other drug use are enormous in terms of lost human potential through deaths and injuries, and health care costs. The quality of life in our communities for all citizens is directly affected by the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse.

Implications For The Year 2000 And Beyond:

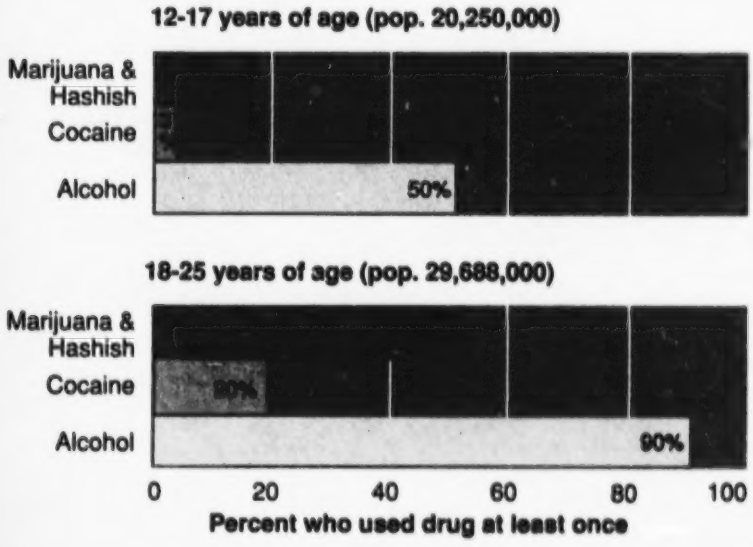
The United States has the highest rate of teen alcohol and drug use of any industrialized nation. The drug problem in this country is 10 times greater than in Japan.

Use of illegal drugs by young people had risen to epidemic proportions by the 1970s. Although the levels of use have declined somewhat from peak levels reached in the late 1970s, they continue to be far higher than they were 25 years ago. The availability of cocaine in a relatively inexpensive form — "crack" — seems to be producing a dramatic increase in the use of this drug. Everyday, young people are killed in drug-related violence.

While some progress has been made, unless there is greater progress toward changing the widespread tolerance of drug and alcohol abuse, there will be 4 million teens who use marijuana in the year 2000, 2 million who use various forms of cocaine, and 11 million who use alcohol. Drug abuse and drug-related crime will continue to burden our criminal justice and health-care systems, and society will pay an enormous price in ruined lives and wasted resources.

Population Estimates of Drug Use in 1988

The following are estimates of the number of people 12-25 years of age who report they have used drugs nonmedically. The estimates were developed from the 1988 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse



Teenage Pregnancy D-

One in ten 15-19 year-olds becomes pregnant each year. There is a one in three chance that a teen mother will have a second child while still in her teens. Teen pregnancy costs American taxpayers over $19 billion per year for cash assistance, food stamps, and medical care.

The Current Reality:

- Four of every ten females become pregnant before the age of 20. Over 90 percent of teen pregnancies are unintended.
- Every day in the U.S., 40 teenagers give birth to their *third* child.
- The most recent data (1985) show that almost 400,000 girls aged 15-17 became pregnant. Nearly half ended their pregnancies by abortions; over 50,000 had miscarriages. Of the almost 170,000 who gave birth, the great majority were unmarried, had not completed high school, and had poor prospects for jobs that would pay enough to raise a family.
- Among 18-19 year old women: over 600,0000 became pregnant; over 230,000 of these had abortions; about 300,000 ended in a live birth.
- While white teen pregnancy rates are soaring, the pregnancy rate is nearly twice as high for non-whites. Nearly half of all black females are pregnant by age 20.

Why It Is A Critical Problem:

For Young People. Half of all teenage mothers will never complete high school, less than 40 percent have jobs, and over half end up on welfare. One half of all teenage mothers remain single parents and are likely to live in poverty. A total of 85 percent of black and 72 percent of white female-headed households with mothers under 25 are poor.

For Employers. Pregnancy is the most common reason cited why young women drop out of school, and dropouts are at high risk of being unemployable. Given the shrinking American work force, employers will need these young mothers to fill the jobs of tomorrow. This need will require employers to face the reality of providing training and affordable child care.

For Society. Children of teen parents are at higher risk of becoming teen parents themselves and run a high risk of later unemployability, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty and a permanent underclass. Of married teens who give birth, 46 percent will go on welfare within four years. Of unmarried teens who give birth, 73 percent will be on welfare within four years. Teenage pregnancies cost the U.S. over $19 billion a year in welfare expenses alone.

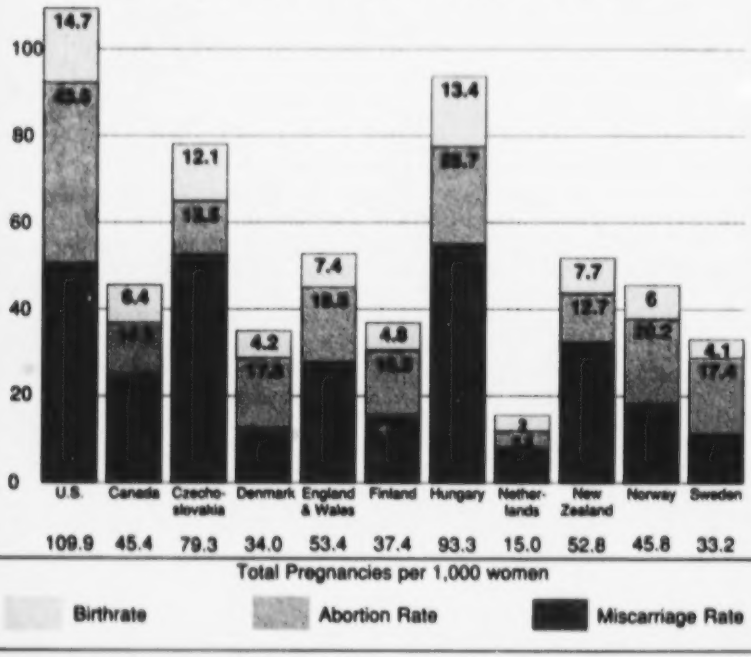
Implications For The Year 2000 And Beyond:

Between 1973 and 1985, the number of teenagers who became pregnant hovered around 1 million per year. Although the number of pregnancies remains constant, due to the shrinking number of female teenagers during this period the pregnancy rate grew by 15 percent: from 9.6 per hundred to 11 per hundred.

In the year 2000 and beyond, unless circumstances change, nearly 400,000 teenage girls age 15-17 and another 600,000 older teenagers will become pregnant each year.

Birth, Abortion and Pregnancy Rates in Teenagers

Rates per 1,000 women aged 15-19, 11 countries, 1983



Sources: Numbers of Abortions—C. Tietze and S. K. Henshaw, *Induced Abortion: A World Review, 1986*, 6th Edition, The Alan Guttmacher Institute, New York, 1986. Births and Populations—Estimates were obtained from the statistical offices of the countries.

Youth Unemployment D+

As of June 1989, the unemployment rate for 16-19 year-olds was 15.6 percent. Those who remain unemployable will be unable to pay taxes, contribute to Social Security, or support themselves in today's society.

The Current Reality:

- As of June 1989, the unemployment rate for all youth aged 16-19 was 15.6 percent; for whites, it was 13.0 percent, and for black youth, the unemployment rate was 36.5 percent.
- Many of these youth who are unemployed are also unemployable, lacking the basic skills needed by today's employers. The New York Telephone Company tested 57,000 applicants for entry-level jobs before finding 2,000 who qualified. The Motorola Company found that only 20 percent of its applicants can pass a simple seventh-grade English comprehension or fifth-grade math test.
- Despite some progress in recent years, unemployment rates remain unacceptably high among young high school graduates. As of October, 1988, there were nearly one million persons aged 16-24 who had high school diplomas and were actively looking for work, but were unable to find it. (This does not include those who are currently enrolled in college.) The unemployment rate among this group was 8.2 percent, nearly two-thirds higher than the overall unemployment rate of 5 percent.
- Among black high school *graduates* who were not enrolled in post-secondary schools, the unemployment rate was 16.7 percent; among Hispanics, it was 11.8 percent. Among white non-Hispanic youth in the same situation, the unemployment rate was 6.3 percent.

Why It Is A Critical Problem:

For Young People. Today's unemployed youth are less prepared for the workplace in terms of skills, attitudes, experience and understanding. As a result, they find less opportunity and more barriers in their transition from school to work.

For Employers. In addition to higher formal training costs, business also pays a high price for increased remediation, increased supervision, increases in errors and decreases in product quality. Some employers are forced to seek alternative sources of labor, increase automation, or move factories out of the country.

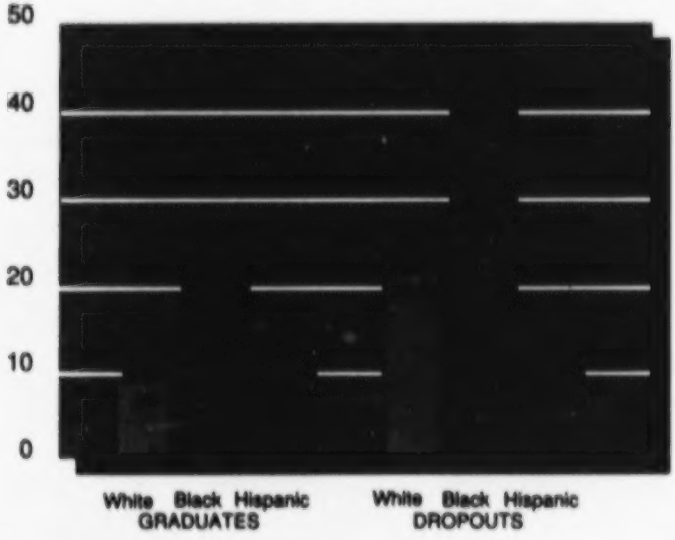
For Society. The costs to our communities—increases in welfare dependency, crime and unrest, and decreases in revenues and competitiveness in world markets—are profound. We risk the creation of a permanent underclass of unemployed and unemployable.

Implications For The Year 2000 And Beyond:

As with other segments of the population, unemployment among non-college youth has declined from peak levels reached in the recessionary period of the early 1980s. However, given that there are fewer teenagers in the population and jobs in retail trade and service industries are going unfilled, anything less than full employment for young high school graduates must be considered unsatisfactory.

Unless efforts succeed to expand employment opportunities and upgrade workforce skills for young people, it is likely that youth unemployment will remain too high. In the year 2000, there will be about 1.2 million young high school graduates who are unemployed, and the unemployment rate for those not enrolled in school will be about 11 percent.

Unemployment Rates Among High School Graduates and Dropouts, by Race, October 1986



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, 1986.

Summary

As the data in this Report Card indicate, many problems facing today's young people are interrelated. A teenager using drugs or alcohol is likely to have problems in school and in looking for a job. A pregnant teenager is likely to be a dropout, unemployed and poor. Therefore, our responses as a society must address these multiple high-risk problems in a coordinated, comprehensive manner.

While some progress has been made and many good programs have been put in place to assist youth in their progress toward healthy and productive adulthood, much remains to be done. It is a fact that despite all of these efforts, the numbers and the trends shown in this Report Card are alarming. If we do not act now, at the local, state and national level, to make a greater commitment to our youth—to work together—to make our efforts more effective and efficient—the implications for our future as a nation are unacceptable.

A Call To Action

Educators and parents, policymakers, human service agencies, civic organizations, business and labor, churches and synagogues, youth advocacy groups, and youth themselves must consider the implications of this Report Card for their own individual communities. Each community needs to assess the current local network of youth services, identify unmet needs, establish local priorities, and develop a collaborative action plan for addressing and solving these problems.

What You Can Do

If you would like to:

- Learn more about the *Making the Grade* project;
- Find out if a Town Summit Meeting is planned in your community, or organize a Town Summit Meeting;
- Order your copy of the *Making the Grade* videotape and discussion guide for your service club, religious group or other program (available early 1990);
- Obtain additional background information, including *Issue and Option* papers on each of the six issues; or
- Inquire about the sources of any data presented in this *Report Card*;

Call or write to:

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